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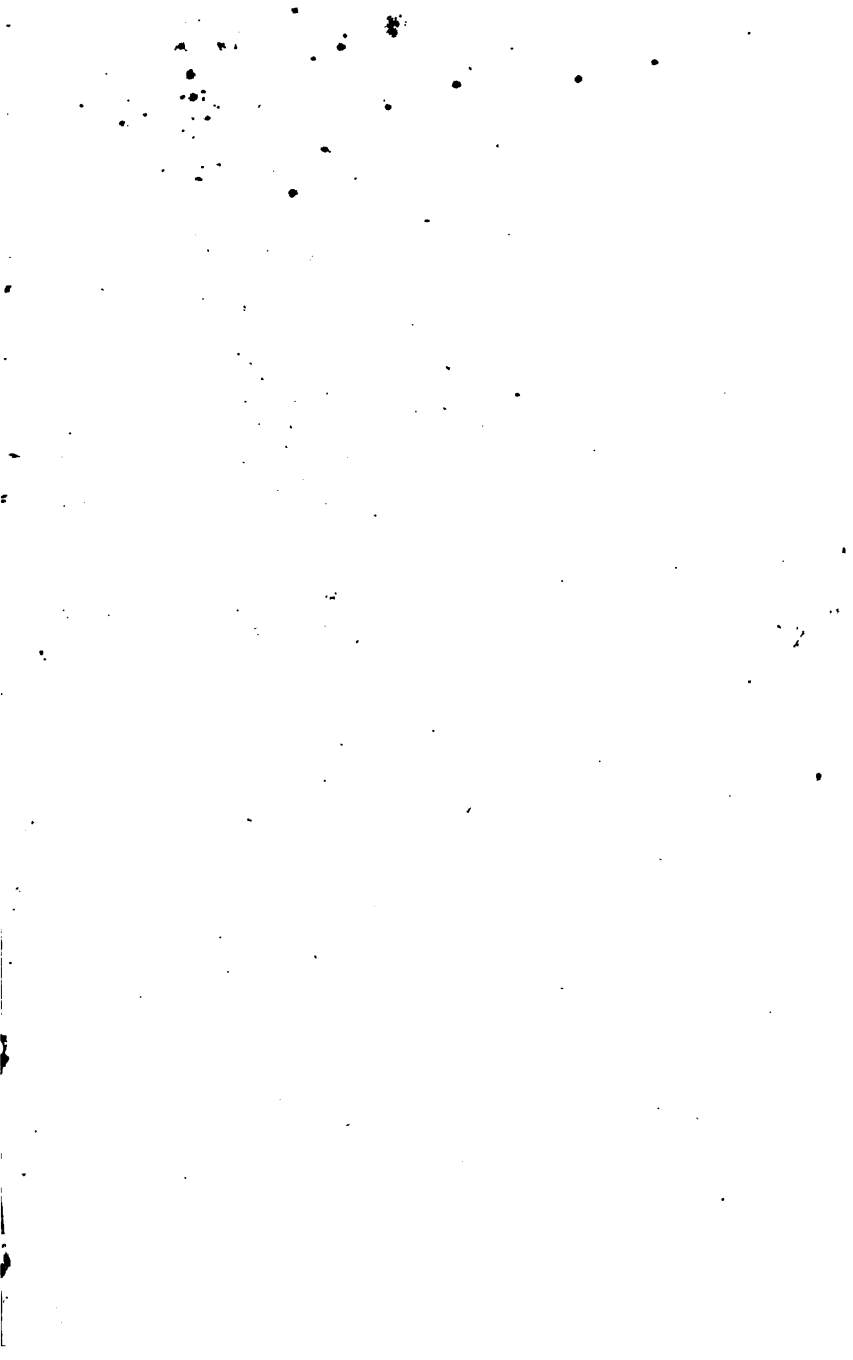
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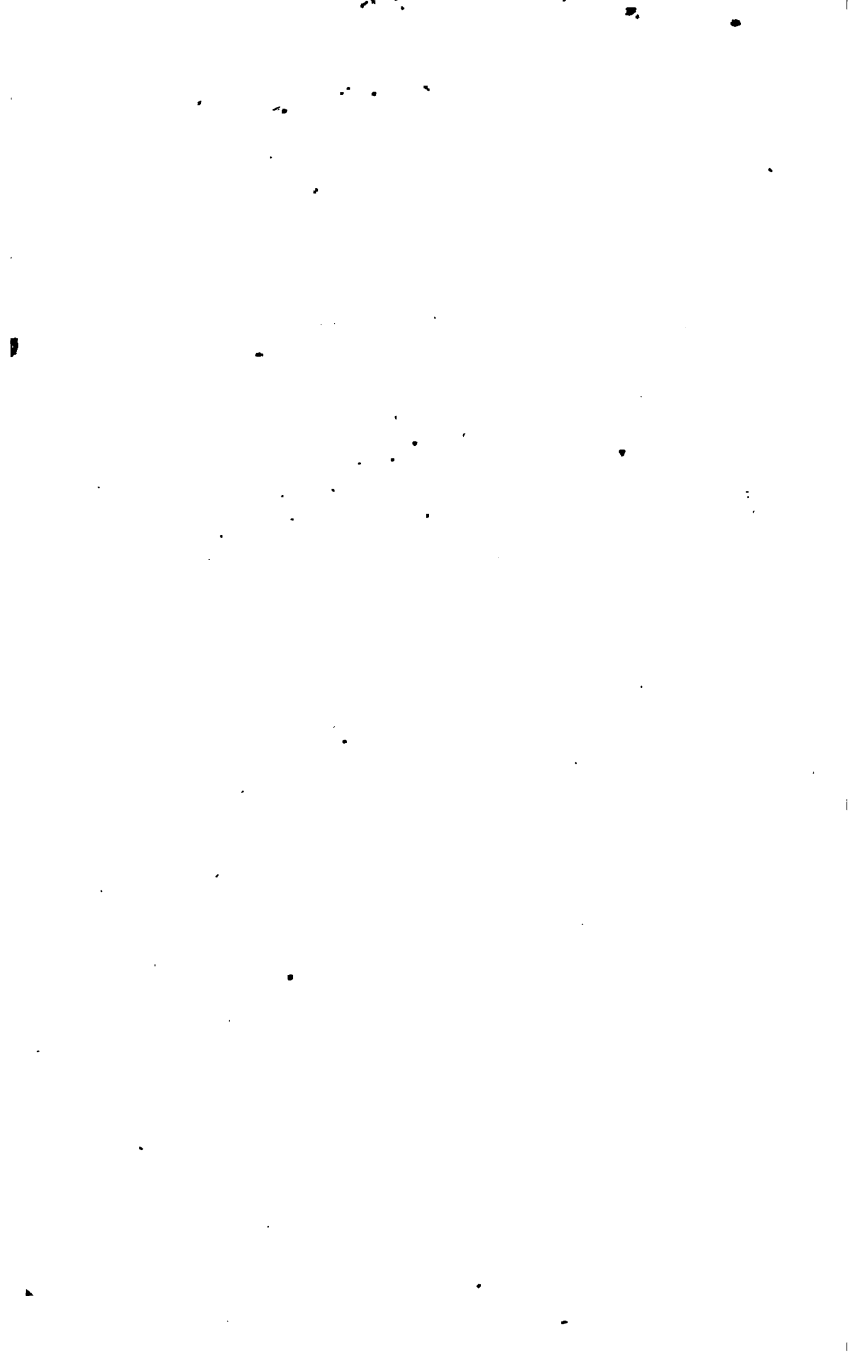


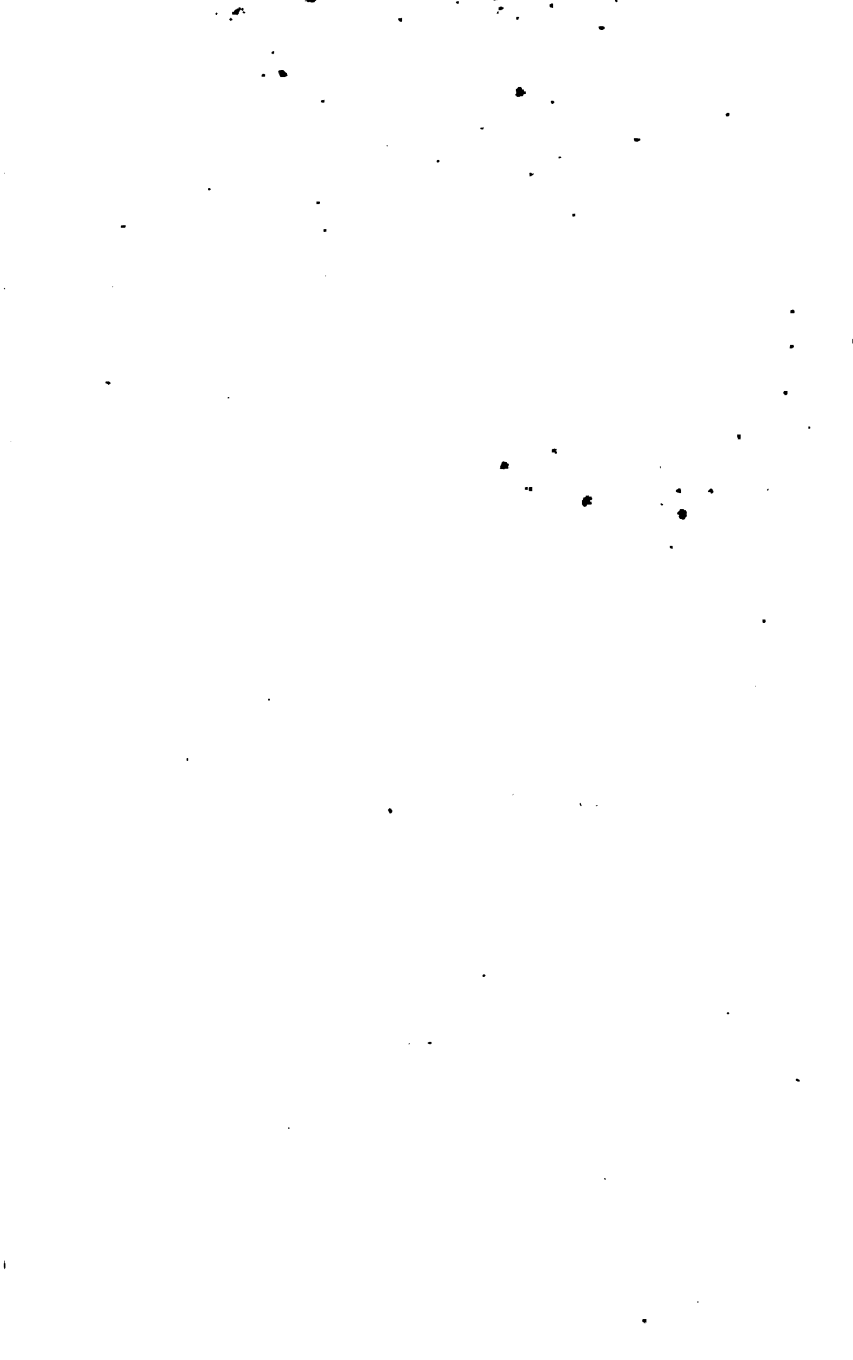
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THE

DOMESTIC CHAPLAIN.

BY THOMAS WILLIAMS.

"O foolish man, to reply against Divine Sovereignty ! It is cutting the cords of human hope ; — sapping the only possible foundation of thine own salvation." — *Strong*.

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THE DOMESTIC CHAPLAIN.

I.

CREATION.

And God saw every thing that he had made; and, behold, it was very good.

GENESIS, I. 35.

As God proceeded, in the creation and formation of the heaven and the earth, it is said six times, in view of a distinct part of the work, that he saw "it was good." When the whole work was done, it is said, "God saw every thing that he had made; and, behold, it was very good." The subject, which is now before us, is the work of God in creation.

1. The nature of this work may engage our attention.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." He caused all things from nothing. He did not form the heaven and the earth from any substance, which had existed in some other mode. Nor did they grow into form and order, after he had created their substance. But God created the substance of all things from nothing, by the word of his power. And then he formed all things, by the acts of his will, from the substance which he had made. Uncreated and created existence are the only beings, which, in the nature of things, are possible. A third kind of existence, which should be neither uncreated, nor created, is impossible.

Uncreated existence is uncaused, eternal and immutable. Created existence must be caused by the Creator ; it must begin to be ; and it is, in its nature, dependent and mutable. All beings, that exist, except God, are creatures. He is the Creator of the heaven and the earth.

2. We may notice the number of creatures which God has made.

In some respects they are numerous beyond number, or above our power to compute. Yet, in their nature and essence, there can be but two kinds of created existence, intelligent and unintelligent ; or spiritual and material. There is reason to believe, that spirit, in every instance, is the same thing, in its simplest essence ; and that matter, in its essence, is always the same thing. Yet God has formed matter into such varieties, that the number of material existences is beyond our conception. Nor less various and numerous are spiritual existences. He has made many sorts of creatures and vast numbers of each sort.

3. We may observe the order of the work which God has done in creation.

Each part of the work is so done and each creature so formed, as to be prepared and adapted to other parts and other creatures. Every creature and thing and form and mode is fitted to the whole system. And the whole system is in perfect agreement with each part. There is no deficiency, nor any superfluity. There was needed nothing, that did not exist ; nor was any thing, that did exist, needless. As God created the heaven and earth, there was no discord, nor any disorder.

4. We may mention the usefulness of the creatures, which God created to make.

Light, the first thing which God caused from chaos, is useful. The sun, the moon and stars are so made and so placed, that they produce great and good effects. The air is useful ; and extends its benefits through the system. Nor less useful is the water and the earth. All creatures and things, in some way, answer important purposes. Their utility is various and extensive, beyond what creatures can comprehend.

5. The happiness of the creation deserves our grateful acknowledgment.

God might have made a world without any beings, that were capable of sensation and enjoyment. He might have made a system of matter, without any spirit, or mind. But the system of matter, as God has made it, is designed and suited for the benefit of such creatures, as have perception, sensation, volition and enjoyment. Creatures of many forms and grades, in the water, in the air, on the earth and in all things, have kinds and degrees of happiness, which are fully known only to their Creator. And to man he gave the world for his possession and enjoyment.

6. The work of God, in the creation, is beautiful.

There was not merely number and order, usefulness and happiness, in the creatures which God made, but beauty and ornament. There is beauty in forms and colors, in motions and sounds. Trees and plants, fruits and flowers, plains and hills, valleys and mountains, brooks and rivers, lakes, seas and oceans, are beautiful. The changes of night and day, evening and morning, the seasons of the year, dews and rains, clouds and storms, hail and snow, lightning and thunder, every object and event, every scene and movement, in the system of matter, are pleasant in themselves, or in their effects. The myriads of animals that creep in the dust, that walk on the earth, that fly in the air and swim in the sea, have their various and wonderful beauties. But, who shall speak of man, as God created him in his own image, male and female? Who can describe his body and his spirit, his eye and his voice, his mind and heart, his station and dignity, his prospects and enjoyments? There is a marvelous variety of beauties, in the mental and moral departments of creation. The whole system of existence, in its original creation, was adorned with perfect beauty.

7. The work of God, in the creation, was the perfection of goodness.

Every part was good in itself; and all parts and portions, in their connections, were very good. This work of God was right and useful; it was happy and lovely; it was holy and glorious. The nature, number and order of his creatures; their usefulness, happiness and beauty, agreed with his own mind; and they were pleasant to his heart. They were good in themselves; and good in

their effects. The work was wrought for the greatest, wisest and best designs ; and with the purest and holiest affections. It employed and manifested the greatness and goodness of God. It gratified his infinite and eternal benevolence.

From what has been said on this subject, it may be observed,

1. That the existence of God is evident, from the nature of created beings.

Created beings are, in their nature, mutable and dependent. They are not able, independently, to preserve and govern themselves ; or to move, or act. They are not self-existent and eternal. They have begun to exist. And it is certain, from their nature, that they have been caused to be. They are creatures. The existence of such beings, as are not immutable and independent, is evident from our senses. They have been caused to exist by some other being ; and they are preserved and governed by his influence. From the nature of their existence, it is certain, that they could not begin, nor continue to exist, without the agency of such a being, as is almighty, omniscient and benevolent. Creatures do exist. And the existence and nature of a creature demonstrate the existence and perfections of the uncreated, intelligent and eternal being whom we call God ; and " whose name alone is Jehovah." No effect can exist without a cause. No creature can exist without a Creator. The apostle declares, " The invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen ; being understood by the things, that are made, even his eternal power and god-head." This statement is perfectly rational and conclusive. It is founded on the nature of creatures, which certainly exist. No one, but such a being, as is truly called God, could create, preserve, or govern any being, or thing. If there were no such being as God, no other being could ever exist. It is as certain and as evident, that there is such a being, as is truly God, as it is that any being exists. If there were no Creator, there could be no creature. There are creatures. And there is and must be a Creator.

2. God will accomplish his object in creation.

He could not have done this work, without an object ;

nor without such an object, as he was both able and willing to accomplish. His object, in creation, must agree with the properties of his nature and the perfections of his character. It must be suited to employ, manifest and gratify his own goodness forever. The accomplishment of such an object would produce the greatest extent of knowledge, holiness, usefulness, happiness, glory, beauty and praise, that can exist in created beings. Such an object would be the greatest, wisest and best, that is possible, or conceivable, even with God himself. The holiness and happiness of God, as well as the highest perfection and glory of his kingdom, would require, dispose and oblige him to propose and accomplish such an object. Had he not, then, the best object in the wonders of creation? Had he such an object? and will he fail of its triumphant and glorious accomplishment? He says, "I am God; and there is none else: I am God; and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand; and I will do all my pleasure." It is as unwise to deny the accomplishment of the object, for which God has created all things, as it is to deny his existence and perfections.

3. The happiness of God, in creation, must be exceedingly glorious.

When he existed alone, in eternity, he would contemplate the great and good purpose and work of creation; and he would rejoice in the effects of his knowledge, power, goodness and wisdom, as they should appear in his creatures. But when God said, Let there be light and there was light; and he divided the light from the darkness; when he made the firmament and divided the waters below it from the waters above it; when the dry land appeared and was covered with grass and herbs and trees of every fruit; when the lights were placed in the heaven for signs and for seasons and for days and years; when the waters were filled with moving creatures that have life; when every winged fowl began to fly in the open firmament; when cattle and creeping things and beasts of every form arose into existence; when man was created in the image of God and received from him the dominion of the earth; when all living

creatures began to move and to taste their food and by their actions and enjoyments praised their Creator ; when thousands of birds and beasts broke the silence that had reigned forever ; when the voice of love and joy and praise reached the ear and heart of God from human lips ; “ when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy ; ” then “ God saw every thing that he had made ; and, behold, it was very good.” What was good in his sight was pleasant to his heart ; and he rejoiced in the good which he caused to exist. He blessed all his creatures and all his works. “ And he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.” And he made the seventh day, in a special manner, holy and happy. There was not then a being, or an object, an event, or circumstance, which was not good and pleasant in the sight of God. “ Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all their host.” And the happiness of God, in his creatures, was as glorious, as the wonders he had done ; and as his own greatness and goodness in their creation. Who, then, will not rejoice in the happiness of God ? “ For of him and through him and to him are all things : to whom be glory forever.”

Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power : for thou hast created all things ; and for thy pleasure they are and were created. And thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever. Amen.

I I.

A D A M.

So God created man in his own image ; in the image of God created he him.
 GENESIS, I. 27.

THE creation of man, in the image of God, is mentioned in a manner which is suited to excite peculiar attention. No other creature, on the earth, was formed in the image of the Creator. Man was distinguished above other creatures, by his creation in the image of God.

In our attention to this subject, it is proposed,

I. To show what is meant by the image of God, in which he created man.

This image cannot be found in the human body. Though the human body be the most wonderful production of divine power, in the system of matter, it has no likeness to God. God is a spirit. His nature has no resemblance to material substances. Man has a rational and immortal spirit. And this spirit resembles the intelligent and spiritual existence of his Creator. But the excellence and glory of God consist in his moral perfection, which is holiness. If Adam had not been holy, he would not have been like God, but opposed to him. Adam must have been, in his moral character, either holy, or unholy. There is no reason to believe that he was, originally, unholy ; but that he was created in the most perfect image of God. Solomon expressly declares, that God made man upright. By uprightness, he means moral virtue and real holiness. Holiness was the image and likeness of God in which he created man. It is proposed,

II. To show the effects which would arise from the creation of man in the image of God.

1. The image of God in man would prepare him to receive the true knowledge of his Creator. As soon as he was conscious of his existence, he would be sensible that he had but just begun to exist ; and he would natu-

rally inquire for the cause of his existence. On this subject he had the best means of knowledge. He had the most friendly and familiar intercourse with his Creator ; and he was as conscious of the existence, presence and glory of God, as he was of his own existence. His mind was as pure as light and his spirit active and vigorous ; so that he could attend, without weariness, or distraction, to the wonderful exhibitions of divine power, knowledge, goodness and wisdom, which filled heaven and earth. Man, in his original rectitude and holiness, had a heart to know God. While the light of the divine glory shone around him, in every object, he would make constant and rapid progress in the knowledge of his holy and blessed Creator.

2. The creation of man, in the divine image, would prepare him to love God with supreme affection. His love to God would accord with his knowledge of his greatness and goodness. As his knowledge of God would fill his mind, his love to God would fill his heart. Though Adam, in his original holiness, would be highly pleased with his own character and condition ; and though he would rejoice in the happiness of the creatures, which God had placed under his dominion ; yet he would not withdraw his heart from his Creator. So long as holy love dwelled and reigned in his heart, his own existence and endowments, his possessions and enjoyments, would not turn him from supreme love to God ; but they would excite pure, constant and ardent affections to his holy name. The holy heart of Adam would incline him to see the infinite perfection and beauty of God, who must forever be, on account of his own greatness and goodness, the only proper object of supreme affection. He would, therefore, turn from himself and from every created being and love the Lord his God, with the highest and purest affections, for his own glory and beauty.

3. The image of God, in which man was created, would dispose him to obey every divine requirement. God can require nothing of his rational creatures, but what agrees with his own holiness. The Scriptures teach us, that holiness is the sum and essence of what God requires in the law and gospel. Holiness, in the character of a rational creature, will be expressed by

perfect and cheerful obedience to every divine command. As holiness was the image of God in which man was created, he would obey him with all his powers. Rational creatures have sufficient ability and opportunity to obey God ; and they are placed under the strongest obligations and inducements to do his will. Nothing, but their voluntary sinfulness can ever prevent, in rational creatures constant and perfect obedience to what God requires. While Adam continued in the image of God, he was willing with all his heart and soul, mind and strength, to know and do his will and obey him in every requirement.

4. The divine image, in which man was created, would dispose him to be perfectly submissive to the will of God. Between opposition and submission to God, there is no medium. But holiness, which is conformity to the divine character, can no more oppose God, than he can oppose himself. Adam, in the image of God, would be perfectly submissive to his will. He would perceive, that it belonged to God, on account of his holiness and sovereignty, to design and do, with all creatures and things, whatever he might please. He would be persuaded, from the perfection of the divine character, that whatever God might design and do would be wisest and best. Had God revealed to Adam the designs of his heart and the counsel of his will, in respect to all creatures and events, he would have submitted his will to the divine will and his interests to the divine designs and the concerns of the universe to the glory of his Creator. In his affections, designs and actions, which extend to all creatures and events, God is perfectly holy, wise and good. So long as Adam remained in the image of God, it would be his honor and delight to be entirely subject to his government and submissive to his sovereign pleasure.

5. The divine image, in which man was created, would induce him to rejoice in God with the highest delight. He would know, that God forever possesses, in himself, infinite greatness and goodness, infinite happiness and beauty. He would know, that such a being would be induced, by his own goodness and for his own glory, to do what was right and wisest and best respecting all beings and events. Adam would be assured, that

he might forever increase in the knowledge of God and discover increasing reasons and motives to rejoice in him. He would enjoy God in all things ; and he would enjoy all things in God. So long as he remained in the divine image, he would be constantly and perfectly happy.

6. The image of God, in which man was created, made him a proper object of the divine approbation and complacency. Holiness is the supreme perfection and glory of God. And he approves and loves holiness in his creatures, for the same reasons, for which he approves and loves it in himself. God is perfectly benevolent towards his creatures. He never feels any emotion of malevolence towards sinful creatures, who are objects of his holy displeasure. But holy creatures he regards, not merely with benevolence, but with complacency. He was pleased with his own image in Adam ; and he loved to express his delight in him by the bestowment of every honor, privilege and enjoyment, which he could receive. God put all other creatures on earth under his dominion. He gave him this world, with all its fullness for his possession. He prepared the garden of Eden for his special residence and enjoyment. He conversed with him, with perfect friendship and delight. And he rejoiced to favor and bless him, while he retained his image, with every possible expression of his approbation and complacency. So great and so happy were the effects, which would arise from the creation of man in the image of God.

1. We may perceive, then, from the preceding observations, the supreme excellence of holiness. It conformed Adam to the moral beauty and glory of God. It was the supreme excellence of man, as he was created and formed by divine power and goodness. And the effects of holiness in Adam were the greatest and best that could exist. Holiness is the highest perfection and supreme beauty of God himself. It sanctifies and beautifies every property of his nature, every perfection of his character and all his designs and works. Every holy creature is adorned with the perfection of beauty ; and has the brightest image and likeness of God. Holiness is, in its own nature, supremely excellent ; and it produces the most important and happy effects.

2. We may perceive the original dignity of Adam.

His character was the perfection of goodness. And his condition and employment were suited to his character. We have often heard of human dignity and glory ; and of the exalted stations, offices and employments, to which some men have been raised. And mankind, naturally and generally, have an high notion of their importance and dignity. But no mere man on earth, except Adam, ever possessed real dignity and true glory. He was subject to no painful labors, to no anxious cares, to no pains and wants. No vain thoughts entered his mind ; no gloomy fears reached his heart. There was no evil within him, nor without him. He beheld the glory of God and enjoyed his presence. He dwelt in God ; and God dwelt in him.

3. We may perceive the exalted happiness of Adam, in his primitive condition. Every thing within himself was right and lovely. Every thing around him was good and pleasant. He rejoiced in the heavens and in the earth. He rejoiced in every creature and object that passed before his eyes. He rejoiced in himself. And he rejoiced in God. His condition was as glorious and happy, as he could desire, or conceive. His happiness was rational and holy ; it was pure and perfect. Such was the original holiness, dignity and happiness of man. Well, then, might it be said, " So God created man in his own image ; in the image of God created he him."

III.

THE CURSE.

Cursed is the ground for thy sake.

GENESIS, III. 17.

OF the original creation it is written, "God saw every thing that he had made ; and, behold, it was very good." But soon the same great and good being is declared to have addressed the common father of the human family, in the affecting and awful words of our text ; "Cursed is the ground for thy sake." As Adam was the representative of his posterity, these words may be applied to the whole race of man. And they place before us the following sentiment,

God has, on man's account, cursed the earth.

To illustrate this sentiment, it is proposed,

I. To show how it appears that the earth is under the curse of God.

That the earth is now in a state which is very different from its original formation, is evident to every human eye. It has, very generally, even in our view, a deformed and unhappy appearance. It shows, by many marks, that it is under the curse of God.

1. It is subject to a great degree of barrenness, in respect to useful productions. There are on earth extensive regions, that are a gloomy waste, without a tree, or plant, or blade of grass, or fountain of water. Many portions of the earth are destitute of useful productions for the support and enjoyment of human beings. Nor is any part of the earth now made to yield its fruits, without much care and labor. But as the earth was first formed, it was so enriched and blessed by the power and goodness of God, that its productions were spontaneous and abundant and most pleasant and useful. There must then have been a great change in the earth. And the change is of such a nature, as affords evidence, that the ground is cursed.

2. The earth now yields many productions that are hurtful. To Adam God said of the earth, "Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." The unfriendly and destructive productions of the ground are exceedingly troublesome and vexatious. They increase the labor and care of men in the tillage of the earth. Sometimes they destroy the desired and expected fruits of their painful exertions.

3. The useful fruits of the ground are often injured by numerous insects and reptiles. These creatures frequently destroy, through large tracts of country and for many years in succession, the verdure and fruitfulness of trees that yield fruit. Pastures and meadows sometimes exhibit gloomy tokens of their pernicious and extensive ravages. Fields of grain are often injured and sometimes destroyed by devouring insects. Sometimes their ravages have been so extensive and destructive, that they have caused want, famine and distress through large regions. When the curse of God is brought upon the productions of the earth by means of such creatures, it is extremely humbling and afflictive to human beings.

4. The state and changes of the atmosphere are frequently destructive to the fruits of the earth and to human happiness. The air is subject to changes of heat and cold, of moisture and drought; and to winds, storms and tempests. These changes often injure and destroy the health and life of men. Scarcely a year, or any season of the year passes, without such changes of the weather as bring extensive injury upon the productions of the earth and defeat the exertions and expectations of its inhabitants. From the state of the air arise frosts and blasts, floods and drought and other evil effects, which destroy the fairest prospects and fondest hopes of the husbandman.

5. From the earth, in its present state, the greater part of the human family receive but a scanty and sorrowful subsistence. In most countries there have often been some persons, who have suffered and died for want of food. In all countries many families are troubled and afflicted for what is necessary to preserve their lives. Even in this land, the people are generally obliged to be attentive, watchful and careful respecting their provi-

sions. But if the earth had remained as it was originally created, it would have furnished, spontaneously, the most agreeable, plentiful and healthy food.

6. Mankind are subjected to painful labor and fatigue, in order to obtain from the earth what is necessary to support their lives. When God said to Adam, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake," he also said to him, "in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns, also, and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." It is with constant labor and sorrow that the greater portion of the human race obtain and receive their daily food. And they rarely cease from their cares and labors about the means of life, until they are removed from this world by sickness and death. This subjection to labor and fatigue, in order to support themselves in life, is in itself a great evil. Yet, in the present state of the earth, this painful and sorrowful subjection is unavoidable. It is the sentence of God himself. And it affords decisive evidence that God has cursed the earth for man's sake. It is now proposed,

II. To show why God has, on man's account, cursed the earth.

It is, unquestionably, on account of human wickedness that the earth is subject to the curse of God. Adam, the head and father of the human family, fell from his original holiness and became sinful. And mankind, as they are born into the world, become sinful creatures. In our context, God declared to Adam, that his sinful conduct was the cause that brought the curse upon the ground and made his condition so laborious and sorrowful. The universal sinfulness of mankind is the reason for which God has subjected the earth, in all ages, to the curse for man's sake. But it may be asked, why should God curse the earth for the wickedness of mankind? To this question it may be answered,

1. The curse of God on the earth is a righteous expression of his displeasure against human wickedness. God is induced, by his holiness and goodness, to be displeased with unholy creatures. And there are many reasons for the manifestation of his displeasure against their sinfulness. When man sinned, he became a proper

object of the divine displeasure. The curse, which God has brought on the earth for man's sake, affords in his daily labor and care and even in his food, a constant and affecting testimony of the divine displeasure against human wickedness.

2. The curse of God upon the earth, for the wickedness of mankind, is a constant evidence of their unworthiness and ill-desert. As sinners are proud, selfish and haughty, it is only by the most humbling conviction, that they become sensible of their guilt. When they are subjected to the divine displeasure, in what is necessary to their very subsistence, they cannot easily prevent an impression of their ill-desert.

3. The evils that are brought on the earth by the curse of God, lay a powerful restraint upon human wickedness. If men could obtain, without labor and care, a plentiful and agreeable subsistence, they would, with their present character, indulge themselves in wickedness without restraint. Then the whole world would be like Sodom and Gormorrah. But they must now labor for their support, or die for want of food. The present state of the earth imposes a constant restraint upon the wickedness of mankind.

4. The curse of God on the earth affords affecting motives for mankind to return to him for spiritual and eternal blessings. If they were in easy and affluent circumstances and could remain in such a state, without their care and labor, they would be regardless of eternal realities and of their spiritual necessities. The degree of temporal prosperity, which is sometimes granted to human beings, is a common occasion of persevering wickedness and eternal misery. The curse of God on earthly things affords powerful motives to seek a portion in that holy and happy state, which no curse, nor sorrow, can ever enter. From the subject of the present discourse, we may perceive,

1. The agreement between what is recorded in the Bible and plain facts. These facts respect the state of the earth and the temporal condition of mankind. These facts exist in all ages. They exist among all nations. In a greater, or less degree, they constantly affect every family and person. These facts are truly described in

the Bible. And it is only from the Bible, that we learn the origin and reason of these facts. This is only one instance of agreement between the Bible and plain facts. There are many facts which agree with what the Bible teaches respecting the flood, the confusion of language, the origin and condition of different nations and the past and present state of the Jews. The history of the Christian church, the errors and delusions, divisions and contentions that have existed on religious subjects and the preservation of real piety and holiness, with the true knowledge and worship of God on earth, agree with the predictions and instructions of the Scriptures. So do the moral character and condition of mankind in all ages. The very enmity, unbelief and objections of infidels and atheists against the God of the Bible and the gospel of his grace, confirm the divine origin of the Scriptures. So far as we have a knowledge of facts in this world, they agree with the statements in the Bible. And facts, at the final judgment and in the future world, will doubtless agree with the Bible on these subjects.

2. There is reason to believe, that when mankind truly turn to God, he will, in a great degree, remove the curse from the earth. They will then be prepared to receive and enjoy his blessing, in their temporal affairs, to his glory and their own good. God blessed, or cursed, his ancient people according to their conduct towards him. When all nations shall fear and serve God, there is reason to believe, the whole earth will receive the peculiar blessing of heaven in its productions. It is written, "Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us." When the earth shall be relieved from the burdens and plagues of war and other moral evils, the time and strength of men, in respect to their temporal affairs, will generally be employed in agriculture. Improvements in agriculture, at a future day, will far exceed what we can now imagine. When mankind shall truly serve and honor God, they will be greatly honored and blessed by him in all their concerns.

3. Since God has good reasons to curse the earth for the wickedness of mankind, they have no reason to murmur against him for the evils which they suffer in their temporal interests. They naturally withdraw their hearts from God; and seek and pursue worldly objects

for their portion and happiness. But they are subject to numerous and severe disappointments and vexations. Under these evils they are prone to murmur and complain. But God has good reasons for their afflictions and troubles. And they ought to be submissive, patient and joyful under his wise and holy conduct. In the person of Jesus Christ God has set before us an example of proper conduct, in respect to the things of this life. And he has given us faithful and abundant instructions. Besides, he does what is wisest and best in our temporal affairs. He does far better than we desire him to do. It is, then, madness and folly for us to complain and murmur against him.

4. Since the earth is cursed for human wickedness, no one, without repentance, can enjoy the blessing of God. Until sinners repent, they are wholly opposed to God in their feelings, designs, interests and exertions. God is disposed and obliged, by his holiness, justice and goodness, to oppose and condemn such persons, as are unreasonably and unjustly opposed to him. God will never repent of his opposition and displeasure against his enemies. If they do not repent of their wickedness and truly turn to God, they must remain under his curse and perish forever.

5. In view of the evils that rest upon the earth, all persons are strongly urged to seek a portion in heaven. There is a world into which sin can never enter; and in which there is no curse, nor plague, no evil, nor sorrow. The gospel opens to you that holy and happy world. It offers it for your possession and enjoyment. It offers it to you without money and without price. It offers it to you through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Look at the heavenly portion which God offers you in the gospel. Will you accept, or reject the offer? What will be your condition if you reject the eternal blessedness and glory of heaven? Jesus Christ has told you; and he has shown you in lively pictures. Are you not, then, urged, by the best and strongest reasons, to turn from yourselves to God, from the sorrows of earth to the joys of heaven, from the condemning sentence of the law to the forgiveness and salvation of the gospel? "Hear; and your soul shall live."

I V.

A B E L.

And the Lord had respect to Abel and to his offering.

GENESIS, IV. 4.

IN connection with the text, there is the first statement that is given in the Scriptures, respecting acts of worship that were rendered to God after sin and sorrow entered this world. These acts of worship were performed by the two first brothers of the human family. One of these brothers and his worship God accepted; but he rejected the other brother. From the text it is now proposed,

I. To consider the character of Abel. As he was born into the world, he was like other human beings. Yet, by the Lord Jesus Christ he is called "righteous Abel." And the apostle says, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he being dead yet speaketh." Abel possessed the peculiar and essential character of pious persons, without which no one can be approved and accepted of God. He believed what was true; and he performed what was right. He had true faith and good works.

1. Abel believed divine truth. Would he have come before God and have worshiped him with acceptance, if he had not believed in his existence and perfections, his holiness and sovereignty? in his knowledge, power, goodness, wisdom, justice, truth and grace? Would he have offered unto God a sacrifice from the firstlings of his flock, in reference to "the blood of the everlasting covenant," if he had not believed in the Mediator, who should, by his own death, lay a foundation for the forgiveness and salvation of sinners? Would he have come unto God, through faith in the divine Redeemer of sinners, if he had not seen and known himself to be a sinful, guilty and lost creature? In order to worship God with

acceptance Abel must have believed the great doctrines of natural and revealed religion. His knowledge and belief of divine truth were the foundation of his duties and of his acts of worship.

2. Abel obeyed, as well as believed, divine truth. With true faith in the holiness and majesty of God, he would reverence his fearful name. With a belief in his justice and purity and his displeasure against wickedness, he would submit to the condemning sentence of the law. With a knowledge of his own sinfulness and ill-desert, he would abhor himself, turn to God with a humble spirit, confide in his mercy, obey his requirements and rejoice in his salvation. Such was the faith, such the conduct and character of Abel. He believed the truth; and he performed his duty.

II. It is proposed to show what the divine acceptance of Abel implies.

1. It implies the approbation of his conduct. Though he had sinned and was guilty before God and deserved his displeasure, yet there was a great change in his character. This change consisted in the exercise of holy, instead of unholy affections. In respect to the nature and not merely the objects of his affections, Abel became a new creature. In such a change, as God requires and approves in the human character, there is real holiness. And holiness is perfect in its nature, though no saint on earth is constantly holy; or in a state of moral perfection. They who become pious, by the light of divine truth, see the holiness and glory of God and their own sinfulness and vileness. And they turn to God with supreme affection for his goodness; and they turn from themselves with holy displeasure for their wickedness. God approves of their character and is pleased with their conduct. For they believe what he teaches and they do what he commands.

2. God's acceptance of Abel implies the forgiveness of his offenses. The law, which is founded on the immutable and eternal principles of truth and goodness, requires and binds every moral agent to be constantly and perfectly holy; and it condemns every sinner to endless punishment. This law God approves and sanctions by the whole glory of his natural and moral perfections.

And he is obliged, by his office of universal sovereignty and by the interests of his kingdom, to maintain this law in its boundless extent and its minutest requirements and prohibitions. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The wages of sin is death." Who, then, that has once sinned, in the least motion of his heart, can be saved from the curse of the law, the wrath of God and the pains of endless death? But all mankind have sinned. Then "how should man be just with God?" Every mouth must be stopped and all the world become guilty before God. "Therefore by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Without forgiveness from God, no one can be saved from present wrath and endless punishment. But God cannot forgive sinners against his truth and justice, his holiness and sovereignty; nor against the peace, the order, purity and happiness of his kingdom. Yet, on the apostacy of Adam, he revealed the Savior and bestowed mercy upon the guilty parents of the human race. And through the name and blood of the divine Redeemer, who is one with God and one with man, God can be just and justify every penitent believer. Abel possessed the character, believed the doctrines and performed the duties, which true faith implies. He complied with the conditions of forgiveness, was accepted in his worship of God and saved from deserved punishment.

3. The divine acceptance of Abel implies the bestowment of every blessing which he could need. He became reconciled to God; and God was reconciled to him. By his own goodness and mercy God would be disposed, when Abel had complied with the offer of salvation, to grant him the evidences and expressions of his affection and friendship. He showed him some present and visible tokens of his approbation and complacency. He gave him the instruction, guidance, comfort and strength of the Holy Spirit. He taught and showed him the riches of his glory in the salvation of sinners. He assured him of his gracious presence through life. He promised him hope and triumph in death. He gave him a title to complete redemption from every evil and to eternal holiness and happiness in heaven. Such are the blessings which Abel would need; and which his acceptance with God implied he should receive.

The character of Abel and his acceptance with God afford a number of practical observations.

1. The instructions of divine truth are necessary to the duty and salvation of sinners. Ignorance, error and deceit are not the means of the worship which God accepts, nor of the duties which he approves. Without divine instruction there would be no reason to believe, that the salvation of sinners could be possible. God only could know it to be possible ; and he could know it to be so, only from his infinite and eternal perfections. Since God has revealed the method of salvation, it is the wonder of the universe, that he can maintain his truth and justice and yet pardon and save such creatures as his truth and justice condemn. They could not be saved without the mediation and atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor could his mediation and atonement be possible, without the revealed manner of the divine existence, according to the doctrine of the Trinity. With this manner of the divine existence, there could be no atonement and no foundation for the forgiveness of sinners, unless God, in the person of Jesus Christ, had been manifest in the flesh and united in himself, humanity with divinity. With this union of the two distinct natures in one person, none could be saved without the atoning sacrifice which he has made by his death on the cross. Nor can any now be saved without true faith in his name. Surely the duty and salvation of human beings are connected with subjects of the highest importance. Who, then, does not need to be taught and shown the truth on such subjects, as awaken the deepest interest in the hosts of angels, manifest and glorify the perfections of Jehovah and establish the only possible foundation for the forgiveness and salvation of sinners ? True faith and good works will never exist in any human being, without the knowledge of truth and duty. And no one will ever have this knowledge without the instructions of divine revelation. Sinners will never repent and turn to God and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and walk in the way to heaven, without the true knowledge of God and man, of the law and gospel, of heaven and hell. Nor will the church and children of God advance in religious attainments, beyond their progress in the belief and

reception of divine truth. There is but one God and one Savior and one foundation of salvation. There is but one gospel and one system of truth and duty. Therefore the great command is given, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

2. Under the instructions of the gospel no one can have the least reason for any doubt, respecting what must be done to obtain acceptance with God. On this subject, Abel, though dead, yet speaks and shows every person his duty. By his word and conduct respecting Abel, God declares and enforces upon all persons what they must do to obtain forgiveness and acceptance with him, with the highest decision and authority. Who, then, will pretend that there is nothing to be done to obtain the favor of God? Who will say, that God does not need our services and that it is of no use to believe what he teaches and to do what he commands? We need his mercy and he has taught and shown us what we must believe and do to be saved and blessed. And we must perish under the curse of his law and his most righteous displeasure, if we do not believe and obey the gospel of his grace. Who then will say, we mean to do our duty and God will do right; and so rely upon their fancied goodness and worthiness for his favor? No one ever does his duty, or can have the least title to the favor of God, until he renounces every degree of confidence in himself and turns to the cross of Christ for pardon and life. Will any suppose that their repentance and reformation will be a sufficient foundation for forgiveness and acceptance with God? Should they, who have sinned, become perfectly holy, their holiness would be no reason for their forgiveness and salvation from punishment; for it would not remove the ill-desert of their former sins. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." Will any suppose, that the goodness and mercy of God are a sufficient warrant for their confidence, without the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ? They who reject Jesus Christ and the offer of life through his death, oppose and reject the goodness and mercy, the wisdom and glory of God, as they are manifested by the only way, in which he can

forgive and save sinners. Will any say, we do not believe that God will condemn and punish his creatures forever? We do not think that he is so unjust and cruel? Who, but themselves, are blamable for their condemnation and punishment? Who, but they who transgress the perfect law of God and then reject his mercy and despise the blood of his Son, are so unjust and cruel, as to destroy themselves forever? God had respect to Abel and to his offering, when he came to worship him with a humble spirit and with holy faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Who, then, will ask, "What must I do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men by which we can be saved." Let no one, then, deny, delay, or doubt what he must do to be pardoned and accepted of God and to be saved and blessed forever.

3. Whatever any persons may do will not secure their salvation, if they reject divine truth. No one can ever perform any duty, while he does not know what he ought to do. And it is only by the instructions of divine revelation, that God teaches and shows sinners what they must do to be saved. They, to whom God sends the instructions of the gospel, are exalted unto heaven in respect to their privileges. But if they disbelieve and reject his truth, they oppose and reject God himself in the greatness of his goodness and mercy and all the blessings and glory of his kingdom. And they are guilty of the greatest wickedness they can commit. The Savior says of the Holy Spirit, "When he is come, he shall reprove the world of sin; of sin, because they believe not on me." He also says, "He that believeth not shall be damned." It is written, "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." They, then, to whom the gospel is sent, perform no duty and can have no acceptance with God, while they reject his counsel against themselves. "Without faith it is impossible to please him." They, who disbelieve and reject divine truth, by which God declares and

shows himself, oppose and reject God and his perfect law, the Lord Jesus Christ and the gospel of his grace. And they oppose their own duty and salvation and form themselves into vessels of wrath and are fitted for destruction.

4. Whatever any persons may believe, without cordial and practical obedience to divine truth; they cannot obtain acceptance with God. The objects, which are placed before us by the light of divine truth, demand and deserve our most diligent attention and our highest affections; and they are worthy to influence our sentiments and actions. If then any persons believe what God teaches and do not obey his commands, they deny their faith by their works. "What doth it profit, though a man say he hath faith and have not works? can faith save him? Wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" Though they who repent and believe the gospel, receive forgiveness and salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ, yet they cannot obtain acceptance with God any farther than they walk in his commandments and ordinances blameless. True faith always works by love, purifies the heart and overcomes the world.

V.

C A I N.

But unto Cain and his offering he had not respect.

GENESIS, IV. 5.

CAIN and Abel were by nature of the same moral character. As they advanced in life they showed, in their external conduct, a regard to God; and they came before him with their religious offerings and services. Yet in the sight of God, who searches the heart, there must have been an essential difference in their characters. For he accepted Abel and rejected Cain. But if Cain had been of the same moral character as his brother, he would have been accepted as well as Abel. What then was the character of Cain? And why did not God accept him? In answer to these questions,

I. It is proposed to consider the character of Cain.

1. He outwardly performed the duties of religious worship. It is probable that he and Abel came at the same time, in a social manner, to worship God. There is reason to believe they had been accustomed to attend religious worship with their parents from their early days. By the influence of parental instruction and example, Cain was induced to bring his offering to the Lord, when he had arrived to the years of manhood and was not under the direction of his parents. It is probable that he then so acted for himself in his religious performances, that it was important and necessary for God to treat him, by visible tokens, according to his real character.

2. In his religious services Cain relied upon his supposed worthiness for the favor of God. From the statement in the context it does not appear, that in his worship he brought any sacrifice with reference to the promised and suffering Redeemer. Sacrifices were offered by divine appointment and were typical of the atonement, that should be made for the forgiveness of

sinner by the death of Jesus Christ. But Cain does not appear to have had any true knowledge of his sin and guilt, or any reliance upon the mercy of God for pardon and acceptance with him. He trusted in himself, that he was righteous and depended for divine favor upon his own worthiness.

3. Though Cain trusted in his supposed goodness, he was wholly sinful. He had by nature nothing of that holiness, which the law requires. Nor had he ever repented of his wickedness and humbled himself before God, so as to receive his pardoning mercy. Whatever might be his external performance of religious duties, his heart was not right, but full of evil. In his acts of worship and professions of piety, his heart was "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked."

4. The sinfulness of Cain consisted in selfishness. His heart was turned to himself and his selfish interests. In the spirit of selfishness he brought his offering to the Lord. Though he might not, at that time, have visibly shown his selfishness, yet when Abel was accepted and he was rejected, he showed by his anger against God that he had no regard to him but for his own sake. And by the murder of Abel he showed, that his heart was wholly selfish and sinful. John says of Cain, he "was of that wicked one and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous." Worse conduct from worse motives could not exist.

II. It is proposed to show why God rejected Cain.

He certainly had no malevolence towards him. Though Cain came before him in an improper manner and with a sinful heart; and though God was highly displeased with him; yet his displeasure arose from his holiness and he was influenced by perfect goodness in the rejection of his services. The same goodness, which induced him to accept Abel, induced him to reject Cain. His conduct towards Cain was not malevolent. Nor was God without interest and affection towards him. Though Cain was angry against the divine conduct and against his brother, God spake to him with compassion and kindness. He said, "Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt

thou not be accepted ?" God told Cain, if he would do his duty, Abel should not be preferred before him ; but that the desire of his brother should be to him and he should be treated with esteem and affection. Even after Cain had slain Abel and had lied unto God, he was favored with divine forbearance and secured against a hasty and violent death. In view of the wickedness, enmity and madness of Cain against God, he felt and expressed towards him the highest degree of kindness ; yet he did not accept him in his worship. And for his rejection of Cain, he must have had the most evident and decisive reasons.

1. Cain had no respect to God when he professed to honor and exalt him, though he was worthy of his highest reverence and affection. He neither believed what God taught, nor obeyed his commands, nor feared his threatenings, nor trusted his promises, nor submitted to his justice, nor accepted his mercy, nor rejoiced in his holiness and happiness. He had the same spirit towards God, when he came before him in his acts of worship, that he had when he was angry against him for his mercy in the acceptance of his brother and his justice in the rejection of himself. Ought God to have approved and accepted Cain in the hatred and murder of his brother ? But Cain had the same wicked character, when he professed to worship him. How could God accept Cain for his wickedness, when he rejected God for his goodness ?

2. When Cain came before God he opposed and transgressed the divine law. This law requires pure and perfect holiness and forbids and condemns every unholy affection and action. This law can never be destroyed, nor relaxed, in its requirements and prohibitions. The Lord Jesus Christ says, " Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets : I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot, or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." But Cain had " the carnal mind, which is enmity against God ; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." God was obliged to try Cain by the law, so long as he trusted in his own works for his favor. And by the law

he was condemned. God could not have respect to Cain against the law, which he opposed and transgressed ; and which is holy, just and good.

3. Cain rejected the mercy and salvation, which are revealed in the gospel. God revealed his design of mercy to Adam. This design was declared to Cain and it was believed and accepted by Abel. In the purpose and offer of salvation, God reveals and manifests his wisdom and power, his justice and grace in their exceeding greatness and glory. By the gospel God opens the way for sinners to return and come to him and receive all the blessings which his almighty power and infinite goodness can bestow. Yet sinners reject the grace and glory of his gospel so long as they refuse to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Cain rejected the mercy and salvation that were offered to him, at the very time he professed to worship God. How then could God accept of Cain, when he rejected the very mercy through which alone he could obtain forgiveness and acceptance with him ?

4. In his professed worship of God, Cain abused the means of grace. He confided in his attendance on the means of grace, when he despised and rejected the grace which these means were designed and suited to instruct and induce him to accept. In this way he substituted his self-righteous and impenitent performances for the mercy of God and the salvation of the gospel, which he ought in his acts of worship to have asked and received through faith in the divine Redeemer. But he preferred his own sinful and unwise conduct, in the external duties of religion, above the boundless mercy and compassion of God and before the precious and atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. He exalted himself in his sin and guilt, against the holiness and majesty of his Creator, Sovereign and Judge. By such conduct he opposed and abused the means of grace and life, so that they became the means of vengeance and death to his soul. He opposed the very offer of forgiveness and salvation, so as to increase his condemnation and punishment. How could God approve and accept the conduct of Cain, when he abused the very means of repentance and mercy to aggravate his wickedness and form himself into a vessel of wrath ?

5. In his professed acts of worship Cain sinned against himself. He might have had the same blessings, which Abel received on the same plain and easy conditions. But he would not perform the least act for this purpose. He would not ask for the mercy of God. He would not accept the infinite and eternal blessings of the gospel, when they were freely offered unto him and urged upon him by the most affecting and solemn motives. He chose to reject the counsel of God against himself. He chose to persist in his impenitence and unbelief, though he must suffer for his conduct present rejection from God and his most righteous and terrible displeasure forever. God could not bestow his acceptance and favor upon Cain, while he sinned against his own soul and treasured unto himself wrath against the day of wrath.

The character of Cain and his rejection from God offer the following reflections.

1. Mankind are as sinful, as they are represented to be in the Scriptures. Their sinfulness is a principal subject in the instructions of divine truth. According to the Bible, they are by nature entirely depraved and sinful in their moral affections and actions. Though they possess the mental faculties that are necessary to the perception of truth and the performance of duty ; though they have the most powerful inducements to be wise and holy ; though they suffer the evil and bitter effects of their unholy conduct ; and though they sometimes have clear and powerful convictions of their sinfulness, misery and ill-desert ; yet they will persist in the ways of error and wickedness and provoke the anger of God against themselves. Such was the conduct of Cain, in the situation and circumstances which were suited to try and show his heart. And who can say that he was not a correct example of the native depravity and sinfulness of mankind ? In his wickedness he was not influenced and corrupted by the example of other persons. The world was not then filled with error and delusion. He had the benefits of religious instruction and worship. God spake to him with affection and kindness. Yet he showed that he had a heart that was full of evil ; and that enmity and madness were in his heart. So depraved

and sinful according to the Scriptures are all mankind by nature. So depraved and sinful have they shown themselves to be by their conduct in all ages and nations. And who does not know, by observation and experience, that mankind are by nature selfish creatures? And selfishness, according to the law and the gospel, is the sum and essence of moral depravity and sinfulness.

2. Mankind are naturally disposed to deceive themselves respecting their moral character. By their proud and selfish feelings, they are disposed to believe and love what seems to favor themselves. Cain, no doubt, thought highly of himself, on account of his external appearances of goodness and his religious performances. There is reason to believe, that he had no suspicion his heart was enmity against God and his brother, at the time and in the act of religious worship. And who has not flattered and deceived himself with a false notion of his own goodness and worthiness, while he was wholly sinful, guilty and hateful? It is written, "He that trusteth his own heart is a fool. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?" Paul says, "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died." He once thought himself blameless; but he was shown that he was the chief of sinners. And he says, "If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." Well may we exclaim, "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults." "Search me, O God and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting."

3. We may see why mankind are so unhappy. They say, "Who will show us any good?" After all their labors, pursuits, possessions and enjoyments, they obtain nothing but vanity and suffer vexation of spirit. They are like the troubled sea that cannot rest. They have lost the true knowledge and enjoyment of real good, because they turn from God and sin against him; they deprive themselves of his favor and suffer his displeasure. Well may we exclaim, "The crown is fallen from our head! Wo unto us that we have sinned."

4. They whom God shall reject and punish forever, will

not be able to say one word against him, nor in favor of themselves. They will be sensible of his holiness, justice and goodness in their condemnation ; and of their wickedness, ill-desert, madness and folly in their transgression of his law and rejection of his mercy. To every sinner God now says by the prophet, "What wilt thou say when he shall punish thee?" Again he says, "Can thy heart endure, or thy hands be strong, in the day that I shall deal with thee?" Well may the apostle exclaim, "What, if God, willing to show his wrath and make his power known, endure with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" And again, "O man, who art thou, that repliest against God?"

5. To whom, but God, will they who are saved, ascribe their salvation? Were they not by nature children of wrath? Have they not broken the law? and will they not forever deserve its curse? Yet they have attempted to justify themselves and rejected the offer of mercy and salvation. Why then did they not persist in sin and destroy themselves forever? God saith to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy ; and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." They who are saved, will ascribe their salvation in respect to its design, foundation and accomplishment to the purpose of the Father, the atonement of the Son and the sanctification of the Holy Spirit. What, if God "make known the riches of his glory in the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory?" The Lord Jesus Christ rejoices in spirit and says, "Even so Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight."

6. Which way, then, do our hearts turn? Do we, like Abel, turn to God with self-abasement and confide in his mercy and accept salvation through the name and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ? Or do we, like Cain, exalt ourselves against his justice, reject his mercy and contend against his sovereignty? O, let us hear him who says, "Be still ; and know that I am God."

VI.

E N O C H.

And Enoch walked with God and he was not; for God took him.
 GENESIS, v. 24.

AN account of Enoch is more fully given by the apostle, in his statement respecting the ancient believers. He says, "By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." The account of Enoch, as it is given by Moses and Paul, shows the powerful influence and the happy effects of true faith. In our attention to the translation of Enoch,

I. It is proposed to mention the evils from which God took him.

1. He took him from the natural evils of this life. "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward." Numerous, various and incessant are the evils, which attend the children of Adam from the cradle to the grave. Wants and cares, pains and labors, are their common portion. Though in our early days, when we ascend the hill of life, we expect to find some objects of permanent enjoyment, they are seen only in prospect. We soon begin to descend from the height we have sought with so much hope and labor; and as we approach "the valley of the shadow of death," we learn, "from the days of darkness, all that cometh is vanity." Unless we choose to be blinded and befooled by the vain dreams and empty shadows of this world, we see and know that "Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity." From every earthly evil Enoch was removed in the midst of his days.

2. Enoch was removed from the wickedness of impenitent transgressors. As mankind increased on the earth, they multiplied their offenses against God and

man. From what Jude says of Enoch, it appears that he was a public teacher of religion. From his eminent knowledge and holiness he must have had an affecting impression of the ungodly conduct of sinners. The folly of childhood, the vanity of youth, the obstinacy of manhood and the stupidity of old age, were ever before his eyes. The scenes of wickedness and misery that he was obliged to see and endure, were a constant burden to his soul. But God took him from these hateful and painful objects.

3. God removed Enoch from the imperfect communion of saints on earth. In their society his spirit was often relieved and comforted under his labors and burdens. But their afflictions were many, their temptations constant and their imperfections sorrowful. He was often more hindered than helped by their spirit and conduct; and troubled rather than comforted by their imperfections and necessities. Often had he hoped that they would become more humble and watchful, more constant and joyful in the service of God. But he was doubtless obliged to exclaim, "A faithful man who can find?" He, who walks with God, must walk alone. And when he is with his imperfect children, he must bear their burdens and feel their sins and sorrows. God removed Enoch, at his translation from the fellowship of his imperfect and afflicted saints on earth.

4. Enoch was taken from his own imperfections. His knowledge and holiness, which were implied in his familiar intercourse and faithful communion with God, would not remove, nor lessen his sight and sense of the evil and plague of his own heart. He might not have been more holy than Job, whom God declared to be perfect and like whom, God said, there was none on the earth. Yet Job said unto God, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." Enoch may not have been more pure and faithful than Daniel, who said in view of God, "all my comeliness was turned in me into corruption." In proportion to his knowledge and holiness must have been his hatred of sin and his sorrow for every vain thought and evil affection. But when God took him, he removed him from every taint of sin forever.

5. God took Enoch from the evils to which his saints are subject in death. In respect to the people of God painful and humbling are the scenes which are connected with the close of life and with the silent grave. From these evils God was pleased to remove and relieve Enoch. Of the other patriarchs, from Adam to Noah, it is written — they died. How greatly then was Enoch distinguished and favored above every other person who had lived on earth ! How peculiar and wonderful was the conduct of God towards him, in his translation from this world and his triumphant departure from the evils of this life, without the pains of death !

II. It is proposed to mention the blessings to which God took Enoch at his translation.

1. He took him to the kingdom of glory. This kingdom was founded and prepared for the righteous, when God created the heavens and the earth. And it will be the eternal residence of the Lord Jesus Christ and his saints and the holy angels. To this kingdom Enoch was taken, as no other saint ever had been. Though the spirit of Abel entered the heavenly mansions at the time of his death and other patriarchs and righteous persons had ascended to glory when they were removed from their bodies ; yet no one before Enoch had obtained the perfection of redemption and passed into the kingdom of glory, with such complete victory and triumph over death and the grave.

2. Enoch was taken to the society of holy angels. They must have been most tenderly interested and affected by the rebellion and ruin of Satan and other angels who kept not their first estate ; and by the entrance of sin and death into this world. With what attention and admiration must they have learnt from God the great purpose and work of redemption through the mediation, incarnation and atonement of Emmanuel ! Into these things, we are assured by the Holy Spirit, the angels desire to look, thousands of years after the first promise of the Savior ; and even after his humiliation on earth and his exaltation to heaven. By the salvation of Abel, though he was removed from this life in a manner so sorrowful and terrible, they must have beheld a glorious exhibition of divine power and grace. What,

then, must have been their wonder, enjoyment and gratitude, when they beheld in the translation of Enoch the complete redemption and glorification of a human being ! And what must have been his happiness and glory and praise in the society of such holy, lovely and happy creatures !

3. God took Enoch to the communion of the saints in heaven. A number, above what we should be apt to suppose, had already been removed from the evils of this world to the mansions of eternal purity and blessedness. But if in heaven he had been joined to Abel only, how affecting must have been their communion ! How different was the manner of their departure from this life ! What must have been the views and feelings of Abel respecting his own body, as it had been mangled and slain by his unhappy brother, when he saw Enoch in the perfection of his redemption and in the dignity, glory, beauty and strength of his translated and triumphant personage ! On the entrance of Enoch into heaven the company and communion of the saints must have been ennobled and endeared to a degree of glory and praise which God only could fully comprehend and enjoy.

4. Enoch was taken into the heavenly presence and enjoyment of God. With God he had walked and conversed in this dark and distant world. Here he had served and pleased him by his faithful exertions and instructions. Here God had often shown himself to Enoch in his works and by his word, Spirit and providence. Here he had been received to intimate communion and enjoyment with his God and Savior. But on earth he saw God through a glass darkly ; but in heaven he saw him face to face. He was received into his presence with fullness of joy and to his right hand with pleasures for evermore. If Enoch pleased God by his faith on earth, how highly must God be pleased with the perfection of his holiness and happiness in heaven ? And in the presence and enjoyment of God, Enoch was exalted to an exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

5. Enoch was taken to the glorious prospects of eternity. By his faith, while he was on earth, he perceived and taught the decisions of the final judgment and eternal retributions. When he was taken to heaven the scenes

of earth and time would be placed before his mind, in their connection with the Redeemer's kingdom and the glory and happiness of his chosen family. He would see the power and the justice of God in the condemnation and punishment of the wicked and the riches of his glory in his vessels of mercy. In the preservation and advancement of the righteous in knowledge, holiness and happiness forever, he would perceive and enjoy the glory of the divine perfections, as they exist in Jehovah, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, from eternity to eternity.

III. It is proposed to show why God translated Enoch.

1. He was translated on account of his faith. The apostle says, "By faith Enoch was translated." The faith of Enoch consisted in the holy belief of divine truth ; and not in the mere fancy that he was a saint and should be saved. Many who believe they are pious and shall be saved, hate and reject the truth of God. Enoch had such a cordial and practical regard to his truth, that he walked in the light of divine objects. This faith kept God before his mind and influenced and governed his affections and actions. The only living and true God, in his existence, perfections, purposes, exertions and enjoyments, as they are taught in his word and shown by his works, is the great object of true faith. Such faith is founded on the knowledge of truth ; and it may continue and increase forever. In proportion to the faith of the servants of God will be their holiness, usefulness and happiness. They who are pious, in proportion to their faith, know, fear, love, serve, please, honor and enjoy God. The great faith of Enoch prepared him to receive peculiar tokens of divine favor. His faith was a preparation for his translation. By faith he was taken from the evils of this life to the blessings of heaven in such a manner, that "he should not see death."

2. By the translation of Enoch God manifested his peculiar affection for the righteous. As individuals, families and nations increase and prosper, they commonly depart from God, reject his truth, oppose his servants and rejoice in worldly objects. They, who believe and obey divine truth, find that the friendship of the world is enmity with God ; and they are opposed and hated for his name. On account of the afflictions and sorrows, the

contempt and scorn, that attend the righteous in this life, while the way of the wicked prospers, it has often been supposed that God has no special favor to his servants. It might have been supposed from the cruel and violent death of Abel and the prosperous wickedness of Cain, when he built a city after he was rejected of God, that the wicked receive greater favors than the righteous. It might seem that they who stand against the world, as Enoch must have done, suffer more than they gain by godliness. But God showed his great and special friendship to Enoch by his translation; and by that example to his true friends and faithful servants, however they may be received and treated by this vain and foolish world.

3. The translation of Enoch affords decisive evidence of the future existence. There is in man a *living spirit*, which is essentially different from matter and can exist independently of the body and separate from it. It is certain, that if no objects were to be obtained but what belong to this life, it would be better if human beings had no existence. The apostle says, "If in this life only we shall have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." Yet mankind are so fallen into present indulgence and so engrossed by the objects of time and sense, that they have little desire, care, or thought for spiritual and eternal interests and enjoyments. It is of the highest importance that there be decisive and impressive evidence of the future state and of the eternal connections and consequences of human conduct in this life. The death of righteous Abel, when candidly regarded, would afford evidence that his spirit would exist after he left the body. Would not his acceptance with God imply the bestowment of greater good, than he received before his death? The whole system of truth, as given by Moses and the prophets, Jesus Christ and the apostles, is founded on the future and eternal existence of human beings, with such rewards and punishments, as shall agree with their character and conduct in this state of trial. When God translated Enoch he confirmed and exemplified, by that wonderful and affecting event, the instructions of his word respecting the future existence.

4. The translation of Enoch shows that the bodies

of the righteous shall be raised from death to a state of glory. There is reason to believe that Enoch was removed in a manner that was visible and conspicuous, from earth to heaven. And it is certain that he was so changed in respect to his body, that he was fitted for his eternal residence in the kingdom of glory. He was designed to be an example of the complete redemption of the righteous from all evil. He was translated from sin and all its evil and dreadful effects, in respect to his body as well as his spirit and soul. By his conduct towards Enoch God gave a sample of the glory to which the bodies of the righteous shall be exalted at the general resurrection.

5. By the translation of Enoch God gave a manifestation of his perfections in the redemption of his people. From the entrance of sin into the world, its most bitter and terrible effects had been seen and felt. The present faith and hope and comfort and holiness of ancient believers, were but little seen and realized against the rising floods of error and wickedness. But Enoch was a bright and shining light. His faith showed the value of divine truth ; and his works the power of divine grace. By his translation God showed the people of that day and he has shown to past ages the greatness of his power and the riches of his glory in the salvation of his people. By that instance of perfect redemption God manifested his perfections, as they will appear in every saint at the judgment of the great day and in the ages of eternity.

From the translation of Enoch we may derive the following observations.

1. From his translation there is reason to believe that God originally formed the purpose of redemption in the counsel of his own will. Who can doubt whether God designed to redeem Enoch? or question the greatness and goodness of his purpose and work in his redemption? If not a sparrow fall on the ground without God, if the hairs of our heads are numbered by him, if for every idle word men shall speak they must give account, if God search our hearts and try our reins, if he will bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, can he be indifferent in respect to any creature or event that ever exists? Could he be indifferent respecting the

number and the persons who shall be saved? From the instructions of the Bible, from the whole design and system of the gospel and from the redemption of his people, who can have any reason for darkness, or doubt respecting the object and purpose of God in the mediation, atonement, ascension and government of the Lord Jesus Christ? But could this purpose and object be obtained, if there had been no sinners to be redeemed? if evil had never entered the universe? If God could not have prevented the rebellion of angels and the apostacy of Adam consistently with his moral government and their free, moral agency, how can he renew the hearts of sinners and accomplish the great purpose and work of redemption? Indifference and inefficiency in respect to any being, object, or event in the universe are inconsistent with the perfections, purposes, agency and glory of God in the wonders of creation, providence and redemption. But he says, "I am the Lord and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I, the Lord, do all these things." And God "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

2. The translation of Enoch may afford us some impression of the future glory of the redeemed people of God. Millions and millions of human beings will be raised from hell to heaven and will behold and enjoy the glory of God in their redemption forever. But creatures who had not been debased so low in sin, guilt, shame and woe, could not be raised so high in holiness, happiness, beauty and praise. In prospect of their future redemption, they can say by faith, in the darkness and sorrow of this life, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." And well may they exclaim, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."

3. From this subject we may perceive the worth of the instructions which are given us in the Bible. Without the light of divine truth and of the glory of God in the redemption of his people, we shall find nothing but vanity of vanities and suffer vexation of spirit. The evidences and expressions of divine power, knowledge, goodness

and wisdom in creation and providence, will show us, with greater surprise and terror, the sin and folly, the guilt and ruin of man, unless we see the exceeding greatness of the mighty power of God and the exceeding riches of his glory, in the purpose and work of redemption. But if his glory in the gospel be seen, the darkness of this world becomes light ; and we shall know why the seraphim cry, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts ! the whole earth is full of his glory."

4. The work of God in the redemption of his people shows us the great and proper object of the Christian ministry. It is, as the apostle declares, "to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ ; and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ ; to the intent that now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." How important, then, it is that the preachers of the gospel "should comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height and know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge and be filled with all the fulness of God !"

5. The translation of Enoch should induce us to regard by faith "the judgment of the great day." By faith he beheld and proclaimed that day, saying, "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints to execute judgment upon ungodly sinners." "Then all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation."

VII.

NOAH.

But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

GENESIS, VI. 8.

FROM the entrance of evil into this world it generally increased, until the distinction between righteousness and wickedness was so confounded, that it had but a small degree of practical influence. At length, religious families began to unite with the wicked in familiar intercourse and the most important relations. Then the wickedness of man became so great that "the Lord said, I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."

Such regard to Noah, in distinction from the millions who were then on the earth, implies an affecting expression of divine favor. From the text it is proposed,

I. To mention the favors which God bestowed upon Noah.

1. He gave him the most important instruction in the midst of general delusion. He taught him the moral state of the world; and the design of his anger against the wickedness and violence, which filled the earth. He also taught him what he must do for the safety of his family. But error and delusion prevailed in the earth. Mankind could not so have corrupted their practice, if they had not renounced the restraints of truth. By their delusions they destroyed themselves. But "Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house."

2. God granted Noah protection in the greatest dangers. As a preacher of righteousness Noah opposed the ancient world for hundreds of years. In that time he had doubtless seen many aged saints removed from the earth; some faithful magistrates relieved from their

heavy cares ; and a few bold and honest teachers of divine truth discharged from their warfare. He was left alone to endure the contempt and rage of deceivers and destroyers. But in the conflict of the world against one righteous man, God taught his hands to war and his fingers to fight ; and covered his head in the day of battle. Through the grace of God he was safe among hosts of foes ; and preserved from the deluge which destroyed the world.

3. God supported Noah in his services against powerful opposition. It is said, once and again, " according to all that God commanded him, so did he." Yet his conduct must have been an object of enmity and ridicule to the profane multitudes of that day. In more grave and polite circles, his supposed craziness would be treated with apparent compassion. While the reasoners and philosophers of his time would attempt to remove his unhappy impressions and confute his gloomy opinions. Sometimes false reports and gross slanders would be raised, like a storm, to destroy his influence and prevent the effect of his faithful instructions and most worthy example. But God was with him until the day he entered the ark ; and the flood came and the waters prevailed ; and " all flesh died that moved upon the earth."

4. God manifested his approbation of Noah, while he condemned the vast numbers who lived before the flood. It must have been strange to the people of that day, that Noah could be so singular ; and that he would not conform to the liberal sentiments and social manners of that enlightened and improved era. It seemed unwise in him to speak and act against the world, as if he were the only righteous man on earth. There were other teachers and professors of religion, whose opinions and measures were popular and successful. As they were followed by multitudes and were prosperous and joyful in their religious prospects, they believed they were right. And they were sure that Noah was befooled and blinded. But God approved and saved Noah, while he condemned the millions who rejected his sentiments and opposed his labors.

5. God gave Noah the highest honor, while he brought

contempt upon the world. The wicked would attempt to honor and exalt themselves. They would boast of their property and their partizans, of their offices and their prospects. They would pride themselves in their amusements and fashions. But God was provoked by their folly and madness. He could see in the objects of their confidence and triumph, nothing, that was worthy of his esteem. But, in the sight of God, Noah was a man of worth. And God delighted to honor him, with his friendship and by every needed honor and kindness.

6. God bestowed salvation upon Noah, while he consigned the people of the old world to destruction. Not a single family or person of the millions, who then lived on earth, except Noah and his house, was saved. Husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, the aged and the young, the rich and the poor, by the righteous judgment of God, were swept from the earth in one common ruin. "They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered the ark; and the flood came and destroyed them all." But Noah and his family, through the favor of God, was saved from that sudden and terrible destruction.

II. It is proposed to show why Noah found grace in the sight of the Lord. For the conduct of God towards Noah, there was one plain, simple, decisive consideration: — Noah was righteous. God said to Noah, "Thee have I found righteous before me in this generation." At his birth, his father "called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed." There is reason to believe that Noah's father, at his birth, offered his son to God in faith, with prayer and praise; and that he received tokens of acceptance. Though Noah was, by nature, a child of wrath, it is probable he became pious in early life; and so was prepared for eminent holiness, as he advanced in years. He was five hundred years of age when God warned him of the flood. For his righteousness, he was approved of God and found grace in his eyes.

Of the righteousness of Noah, it may be observed,

1. His affections were righteous. He had true love

to God and man. With such love, he would hate what was evil and pursue what was good. He would love divine truth. He would confide in the mercy of God and receive the Holy Spirit.

- 2. His actions were righteous. He obeyed the instructions which God gave him. Against every selfish interest and every earthly prospect, for hundreds of years, he walked with God. His righteous affections, under the influence of Divine truth, governed his words and actions.

3. Noah maintained the principles of righteousness. He boldly taught what was right in faith and practice. He proclaimed the righteousness of God in his law ; and the perfect justice of God in the condemnation of sinners. He would show, that men ought to be righteous in all their ways ; and that they were bound to repent and turn to God and serve him. Noah was a preacher of righteousness ; and he taught and preached the principles of righteousness, in respect to the great doctrines and duties of religion.

4. By his righteousness, Noah, through divine grace, preserved on earth the true cause of God. If he had not been righteous, as the world then was, the knowledge and worship of God would have been lost from the earth. And his object and glory in the Redeemer's kingdom and the salvation of his people, would have failed. The righteousness of Noah, in its connection with the purpose and work of God, shows, that he was of more worth than the whole world of sinners.

5. The righteousness of Noah induced him to have God for his supreme object. With the true knowledge of God and holy faith in his name, he stood and walked with him against the world. He labored and suffered for him against the wickedness and violence of sinners. He honored God by true faith and good works. And he was a proper object of divine favor, in distinction from the people, who perished by the flood.

What has been said, on the subject before us, affords the following remarks.

- 1. No one can be approved of God, any further than he is practically righteous. God requires perfect holiness in the law and gospel. Though God offers forgive-

ness to sinners through Jesus Christ, yet no one accepts the offer, until he repents and believes in his name. Nor can a penitent believer be accepted and approved of God, only for holy affections and actions. "Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid."

2. God will make as great a difference between the future state of the righteous and wicked, as he has declared in the scriptures. Who would have believed, according to the common opinions of mankind, that God would have so greatly distinguished Noah from the whole world? But he declared he would do it; and it was done. God declares he will raise the righteous to endless joy in heaven; and consign the wicked to endless torment in hell. And the same holy principle by which he saved Noah and destroyed the wicked of his day, will induce him to reward the righteous and punish the wicked forever.

3. The righteous have the most powerful inducements to maintain their peculiar character. The conduct of Noah and God's grace to him show the immense value of righteousness. As great favors will be bestowed upon the righteous, in proportion to their faithfulness, as were bestowed upon Noah. And the useful and happy effects of righteous conduct will continue and increase forever. What manner of persons then, ought they to be, who are the saints and servants of God?

4. The unrighteous are loudly and solemnly called and warned to turn to God and become righteous. The arguments and motives, for righteousness and against wickedness, have increased, in number and weight, from the days of Noah. By Moses and the prophets, by Jesus Christ and the apostles, God says — "As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways: for why will ye die?" "Your judgment now of a long time lingereth not and your damnation slumbereth not. For if God spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing the flood upon the world of the ungodly; — the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly from temptations; and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."

VIII.

THE RIGHTEOUS AND WICKED.

That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked; and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all earth do right?

GENESIS, XVIII. 25.

WHEN Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom, it is said, "The men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." Their wickedness increased, until "the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know." When God had surveyed Sodom and Gomorrah, it is evident he was obliged to destroy those cities for their wickedness. It is also evident that he showed Abraham his purpose respecting their destruction. "And Abraham drew near and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous in the city; wilt thou also destroy and not save the place for the fifty righteous that are in it? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" The text places before us the following doctrine, God will distinguish the righteous from the wicked, according to their different characters. In our attention to this subject, it is proposed.

I. To mention the difference between the characters of the righteous and the wicked.

They do not differ in respect to their native character. For all mankind are, by nature, sinners. Nor do they differ in respect to their ill desert. For they who have sinned, forever deserve the curse of the law. But,

1. The righteous differ from the wicked, by a change in the nature of their affections. They have been renewed in the temper of their minds and have become new creatures in their moral character. But the wicked persist in their wickedness. There is not merely a circumstantial, or gradual difference between the righteous and the wicked; nor is the difference merely in the objects of their affections; but there is an essential difference in the nature of their affections. The righteous have some holy affections, though they are not constantly holy. But the affections of the wicked are unholy. Their hearts are full of evil.

2. The righteous differ from the wicked in the supreme object of their affections. God is the supreme object of the righteous, on account of his supreme greatness and goodness. They turn from themselves and from all creatures unto him with supreme affection and delight. But the wicked never turn from themselves. They are their own supreme object in their apparent regard to their Creator and fellow creatures.

3. The righteous rely upon the mercy of God for salvation; but the wicked rely upon their supposed goodness for his favor. In view of the holiness of God the righteous discern their own sin and guilt; and they know that they cannot be saved on the foundation of any worthiness in themselves. But in Jesus Christ they see a sufficient foundation for the forgiveness of the greatest sinners; and they rely upon him for pardon and life. But the wicked neither submit to the law with a penitent spirit, nor rely upon the pardoning mercy of God.

4. The righteous under the evils of this life are preparing for the kingdom of glory; but the wicked are fitting for destruction. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is as darkness, they know not at what they stumble." By the light of divine truth and through the grace of God, the righteous under the humbling scenes of this life are forming into vessels of mercy; but the wicked resist the light of truth, reject the grace of God and harden themselves into vessels of wrath. It is proposed,

II. To show how God must distinguish the righteous

from the wicked, according to their different characters.

1. He must regard the righteous with complacency ; but the wicked with displeasure. In proportion to his own perfect righteousness and goodness, God approves and loves what is right and good in other beings ; and he condemns and hates what is wrong and evil. Abraham said unto God, " That the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee ; shall not the judge of all the earth do right ? " The goodness, which induces God to regard the righteous with complacency, excites his displeasure against the wicked.

2. God will favor the righteous and oppose the wicked. Though God may afflict and chastise the righteous, it is not for his pleasure, but for their profit ; that they may be partakers of his holiness. And though the wicked may appear to prosper and to obtain the desires of their hearts, their temporal prosperity, if they continue in their wickedness, will increase their eternal misery.

3. God will reward the righteous and punish the wicked according to their conduct. Though the righteous can never do more than their duty and can claim no reward for any merit, yet God so highly esteems what is right and good, that he will manifest his holiness by the bestowment of honor and joy upon the righteous according to their faithful services. The Lord Jesus Christ says — " Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." As God will reward the righteous for every good act, so he will punish the wicked for their evil conduct. The Apostle declares, that God will render " indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish unto every soul of man, that doeth evil." God will distinguish the righteous by the most glorious rewards and the wicked by the most terrible punishments.

4. God will bestow upon the righteous the greatest happiness they can enjoy ; and consign the wicked to the greatest misery they can suffer. As the righteous renounce the spirit of selfishness and become benevolent, they will be prepared to enjoy God and the blessings and glories of his kingdom. But the wicked, in the spirit of selfishness, can neither receive, nor see any real good.

They will be involved "in the blackness of darkness," and suffer endless anguish and despair. To the wicked God says—"Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty; behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed; behold my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart and shall howl for vexation of spirit."

III. It is to be shown why God will distinguish the righteous from the wicked. Such a distinction will include the most affecting transactions, in respect to human beings, that can be effected by God himself. And shall he not have for his conduct the most decisive reasons? Why then shall not the righteous be as the wicked with God?

1. God will not make such distinctions from any improper difference in his affections towards the righteous and the wicked. God is perfectly holy and righteous in his affections and actions. His love to the righteous and his hatred to the wicked, arise from his impartial righteousness and benevolence. Towards the righteous he has no partial affections, nor any respect to persons. Towards the wicked he has no cruel or unkind designs. In the distinction which he will make between the righteous and the wicked, he will be perfectly holy in his affections although the effects which will arise from his conduct, will be as different as the joys of heaven and the woes of hell.

2. In the distinction which God will make between the righteous and the wicked, he will be influenced by the righteousness of his own character. He cannot act contrary to his eternal and immutable righteousness. From the very nature of his moral perfection he loves the righteous and hates the wicked. As he is disposed to esteem and maintain his own glorious character, he will make such distinctions between the righteous and wicked, as agree with their different characters.

3. God is, officially, obligated, as the Sovereign and Judge of the universe, to make distinctions, according to their characters, between the righteous and the wicked. It was on this account, that Abraham stood and prayed before God and offered his arguments against the wicked

and for the righteous. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" And the Apostle asks — "Is God unrighteous, who taketh vengeance? God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?" Would God do what truth, justice and goodness demand, if he should not make between the righteous and the wicked such distinctions, as agree with their different characters? As the supreme and final Judge of all mankind, God has "appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness."

4. The interests of the universe require, that God should distinguish the righteous from the wicked, according to their different characters. If the righteous should be as the wicked with God; if he should slay the righteous with the wicked; or approve and bless the wicked with the righteous; he would renounce his glory, destroy his blessedness, subvert his government and spread darkness and violence through the universe. Shall God say — "Woe unto them, that call evil good and good evil; that put darkness for light and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter;" and yet shall he not distinguish between the good and the evil, the righteous and the wicked? That the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from God: *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*

Since God will make between the righteous and the wicked such distinctions, as shall agree with their different characters, the following remarks deserve our serious consideration.

1. None will be finally approved and blessed of God, but they who repent and become holy. The mercy of God in the gospel, though it opens the way for the free offer of forgiveness and salvation to sinners, does not in the least degree relax their obligation to be holy, or secure to impenitent transgressors any title to divine favor. Only unto the righteous will the Lord Jesus Christ say at the final judgment, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Though they will be pardoned and saved from punishment through the riches of divine grace, yet they will be approved, rewarded and blessed according to their obedience to the divine requirements.

2. None will perish, but they, who persist in wicked-

ness and fit themselves for destruction. There is no preparation in the character of sinners for the communion and enjoyments of the righteous in heaven. By their voluntary and persevering wickedness they establish the foundation for their own condemnation and punishment. Without holiness no man can see God. It will be unto the wicked, that the Supreme Judge must say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

3. They, who perish, will be obliged to blame themselves, for the treatment they shall receive from God. They will be convinced by their own consciences, that they are wholly unrighteous and guilty in their enmity and disobedience; and that God is influenced by perfect holiness, justice and goodness in their rejection and torment. They will eat the fruit of their own ways and be filled with their own devices. And whom, but themselves, can they blame for their ruin?

4. All holy creatures will heartily approve of the conduct of God, in the distinctions which he shall make between the righteous and the wicked. The spirit of holiness and benevolence, which forms their peculiar characters, will forever accord with the righteous judgment of God against incorrigible transgressors. Nor will it be from a partial and selfish regard to themselves, that they will approve of the divine conduct in the approbation of the righteous. The spirit of impartial righteousness and disinterested benevolence will dispose the righteous to rejoice in the holy conduct and decisions, by which God will separate the just from the unjust forever. It is written — "The righteous shall rejoice, when he seeth the vengeance."

5. The scriptural account of the final judgment is perfectly rational. The difference, which shall then be made between the righteous and the wicked, will perfectly agree with their different characters. The righteous will not be approved and rewarded and blessed above the degrees of their righteousness. Nor will the wicked be condemned and punished and cursed beyond the measure of their wickedness. Nor will their rewards and punishments be in any respect greater, or more permanent than the difference in their characters. The

doctrine of the final judgment which teaches that the righteous shall be raised to endless blessedness and glory in heaven and the wicked consigned to endless torment and shame in hell, is founded on the principles of eternal and immutable righteousness, goodness and truth.

6. It should be the constant object of Christian teachers to show the difference between the righteous and the wicked, with its everlasting connections and consequences. Other differences and distinctions are not worthy of a moment's thought, when compared with the difference between the righteous and the wicked. "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked ! it shall be ill with him ; for the reward of his hands shall be given him."

7. Let every person apply this subject to himself. Each one belongs to the righteous, or to the wicked. There is no third class, nor can there ever be, among the millions and the millions of the human family. According to our present character, we are the objects of divine approbation or condemnation.

With every moment our term of trial hastens to a close. Our characters will soon be formed for the "judgment of the great day ;" and we shall receive from the Lord Jesus Christ a sentence, which will place us in heaven, or in hell for eternity.

II.

ABRAHAM'S HUMILITY.

And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes.

GENESIS, XVIII. 27.

WHEN Abraham spake these words he had lately been honored by an appearance of the Lord with angels from heaven. And the Lord had declared that Abraham should surely become a great and mighty nation; and that the nations of the earth should be blessed in him. He had also given the highest commendation of Abraham's character and conduct. As an evidence of the friendship which existed between God and Abraham, God revealed to him his purpose to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. The knowledge of this purpose induced Abraham to plead with God to spare Sodom for the righteous that might be found in that city. In proportion to the piety of Abraham and the honors and blessings which he received from God, were his confidence and his humility in his prayers for Sodom. The words of the text express his humble opinion respecting himself; and they place before us the following sentiment, They who are pious have a humble opinion of themselves.

To illustrate this sentiment it is proposed,

I. To show that pious persons have a humble opinion of themselves. This may be evident,

1. From the character of pious persons as it is given in the Scriptures. Abraham is among the most eminent and favored servants of God. He is called the friend of God and the father of the faithful. Yet he calls himself "but dust and ashes." Job says, "Behold, I am vile. I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." Isaiah says, "We are all as an unclean thing; and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." The apostle calls himself the chief

of sinners and less than the least of all saints ; and he says, "I am nothing." Besides the general character of pious persons, according to the Scriptures, implies the spirit of humility, self-aborrence and self-abasement.

2. It is evident from what is required of all persons, that they may become pious. They are required to turn from themselves, to repent and abase themselves before God and to confess and forsake their sins. They are required to renounce their selfishness, to come unto the Lord Jesus Christ and learn of him and to believe on his name, that they may be saved. Such duties will never be done by any person with a proud and selfish spirit.

3. It is evident from the native character of mankind, that none will ever be pious without a humble spirit respecting themselves. All mankind are by nature entirely depraved and sinful. They are guilty, hateful, wretched and ruined creatures. They are opposed to God and his holy law and filled with unrighteousness, wickedness and madness. Will such creatures ever believe and love the truth respecting themselves, while they think highly of their own character and conduct ?

4. All mankind are justly condemned by the law of God and deserve everlasting punishment and misery. It is written, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law : that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God." No one has any right views and feelings respecting himself, until he approves of the law in its precepts and penalty ; and submits himself into the hands of divine justice. But who, with a proud spirit, will condemn himself and justify God and his law in the condemnation and punishment of sinners ?

5. The foundation of salvation according to the gospel shows, that they who become pious have a humble opinion of themselves. The only foundation on which any human being can be saved from the curse of the law, is the atonement which has been made on the cross by the Lord Jesus Christ. He was born in a stable. He had no home on earth. He was a man of sorrows. He was an object of hatred and contempt, while he lived in this world. And he died the most painful and shameful death. Will any one turn to God through him and

ask and receive for his sake and through his blood the pardon of his sins and salvation from endless punishment, without a broken heart and a contrite spirit?

6. They who truly believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, are caused to come to him by the almighty power and sovereign grace of the Holy Spirit. When he was on earth, he said to his hearers "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." His confidence and assurance, that any persons would ever come to him and be saved, were founded on the purpose and grace of God. He said, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." Who, then, can think highly of himself and yet believe, obey and love the gospel of the grace of God? Surely they who are pious must know themselves to be most sinful and foolish, most guilty and hateful creatures. And they must be sensible that they ought always to maintain the spirit of humility and self-abasement.

II. It is proposed to show why they, who are pious, have a humble opinion of themselves. It is not because they are not favored with peculiar privileges and enjoyments even in this life. Nor is it because they are not entitled to the highest glory and happiness in heaven. Nor is it because they have no real goodness, nor any degree of confidence and comfort respecting their piety. Nor is it because piety produces a gloomy effect upon their minds. Nor are they humble because they are blinded and ignorant respecting themselves. Humility is not the effect of ignorance and wickedness, but of knowledge and goodness.

1. Pious persons are humble because they have some true knowledge of God. If "all nations before him are as nothing; and are counted to him less than nothing and vanity," it may well be said, "Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity." If "the heavens are not clean in his sight, how much more abominable and filthy is man, who drinketh iniquity like water?" It was in view of God that Job abhorred himself; that Isaiah cried, "Woe is me; for I am undone;" and that Daniel said, "All my comeliness was turned in me into corruption." It is by their increasing knowledge of God, that they who are pious, learn to abase themselves and to exalt him.

2. They, who are pious, have an increasing knowledge of themselves. It is by the light of truth, through the power and grace of the Holy Spirit, they first turn from themselves unto God. But they know little of their sinfulness and dependence when they first turn from darkness to light. They are in a state of constant trial; and they will be shown more and more of themselves, as long as they live. And the effect of their knowledge will be increasing humility.

3. They have some proper affections under the trying scenes of this life. They are disposed to review and remember the way they have been led, that they might be humbled and proved and know what was in their heart. To his people God says, "I will establish my covenant with thee and thou shalt know that I am the Lord; that thou mayest remember and be confounded and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done." They who have any proper affections under the various trials of this life, will be more and more grieved and humbled before God.

4. Pious persons are, in some degree, sensible of what they must experience. They renounce every prospect and hope of a paradise on earth. They expect to pass from wilderness to wilderness as long as they live. Cares and labors, temptations and afflictions, imperfections and necessities are their constant companions. The scenes of sickness, death and the grave are before their eyes and on their hearts. Their appearance at the final judgment and the retributions of eternity are objects of increasing attention and afford reason for continued humiliation to the faithful children of God. With such objects before their minds, how can they appear unto themselves but as dust and ashes?

With such an opinion of themselves they will,

1. Be very desirous to obtain divine instruction. They will be sensible that God is the only being who can know and teach what they need to learn. They will not trust in themselves for knowledge, nor will they rely upon the opinions and notions of their fellow-creatures. But they will turn to God and trust in him and cry to be taught by his word and Spirit and Providence.

2. They will learn to be patient under the evils of this life. They will not seek nor desire great things for themselves. But they will learn of him, who is meek and lowly in heart ; and so will they find rest unto their souls. They will have need of patience. Though patience is a still and quiet virtue and assumes no pomp nor show, yet it is of great value in the sight of God and exceedingly beneficial and beautiful. The Savior said to his disciples, "Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not a hair of your head perish. In your patience possess your souls."

3. They will be thankful for the mercies they receive from God. With the spirit of humility Jacob said unto God, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which thou hast showed unto thy servant." They, who are pious, understand the spirit of the publican who cried, "God be merciful unto me, the sinner." And they know that for every blessing they receive and for every hope of any good, they are indebted to the mercy of God. In proportion to their knowledge of their unworthiness and ill-desert, they will be thankful for the benefits they enjoy.

4. They will have the spirit of kindness to their fellow-creatures. They will not think themselves above an obligation to be attentive and affectionate to any human being, or to any inferior animal. God "giveth to the beast his food and to the young ravens that cry." Who, then, with a right spirit, can exalt himself above attention, sympathy and kindness towards the afflicted, the tempted and needy? When Lazarus died, he was "carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom" The Lord Jesus Christ, on the cross prayed for his murderers, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

5. They, who are pious, will have increasing fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. And every Christian for his sake will learn to say, "I will not glory but in mine infirmities."

I.

THE SELF-DENIAL OF ABRAHAM.

For now I know, that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.

GENESIS, XXII. 12.

IN the first verse of the chapter which contains the text, it is written, "It came to pass, after these things, that God did tempt Abraham." Abraham had been called, in early life and through all his days, to constant trials. And he might now have begun to indulge the hope, that his trials were ended. But at the call of God, he said, "Behold, here I am." And when God enjoined upon him the most painful service, even to offer his son, his only son, Isaac, whom he loved, he rose early and went toward the place, of which God told him, until on the third day, he saw the mountain, on which he was to offer his son. Abraham then left the young men and went alone with Isaac and built an altar and laid the wood in order, and bound his son and laid him on the altar and stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay Isaac. So Abraham, in his heart, obeyed God; and he was willing and ready with his hand, to perform the trying service. But the angel of the Lord said, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do any thing unto him; for now I know, that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me." By the conduct of Abraham under this trial, we are taught, That the faithful servants of God withhold nothing from him.

1. This doctrine is evident from the divine requirements. In the law God requires us to love him with all the heart and soul, with all the mind and strength. This law cannot be destroyed, nor relaxed by the Gospel. Though God, through the riches of his grace, offers forgiveness to sinners, yet no one accepts the offer while he opposes

the divine law. The Saviour says, "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." Again he says, "Whosoever he be of you, that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." It is then impossible to obey the divine requirements, and yet withhold any thing from God.

2. The doctrine is evident from the conduct of the faithful servants of God, under decisive trials. When Enoch walked with God, he must have given himself wholly to him. Noah could have withheld nothing from God, when he "did according unto all, that the Lord commanded him." Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samuel and David, under thorough trials, devoted themselves to God. Of the early converts to the Lord Jesus Christ, it is written, "Neither said any of them, that aught of the things, which he possessed, was his own." God is the supreme object of his faithful servants; and they submit all things to him.

3. They, who withhold any thing from God, oppose him. They place some object above God. The Savior says, "No man can serve two masters. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon. He, that is not with me, is against me." As God owns and claims all things, they, who withhold any thing from him, do not truly yield any thing to him; but they oppose him in all things. And when they so conduct, they are not his faithful servants. They have neither the faith, nor the works of faithful Abraham, the friend of God.

But it may be asked, why do the servants of God withhold nothing from him? Have they no regard to themselves? Have they no desire for their own peace and comfort? Are houses and lands, raiment and food, health and life of no worth in their account? Has a servant of God no affection for parents, or brothers or sisters, or sons, or daughters? They, who are faithful to God, cannot be unfaithful to men. The true fear of God and the proper regard to man, the true love of man and supreme love to God are consistent and inseparable. Had Abraham no affections for Isaac? Had Job no re-

gard for his children? Had not the Lord Jesus Christ the tenderest affection to his mother and the most constant friendship to his disciples? The spirit of supreme affection to God, by which his servants are induced to withhold nothing from him, produces the most tender regard to their fellow creatures and themselves. Why, then, do they withhold nothing from God? It may be answered, because,

1. They are sensible that all things belong to him. God has made all things; and he has made all things for himself, and he preserves and governs all creatures and all worlds for his glory. Nor can he renounce his property and interest in any creature, or thing, that ever exists. God said to Job, "Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine." The Psalmist says,—"The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein." And the Apostle says, "of Him and through Him and to Him are all things; to whom be glory forever." Who then can rightly claim, or reserve any thing for himself against God?

2. They are persuaded, that God will do what he pleases with all things. He cannot be indifferent, or unaffected, or inefficient in respect to any being, or object, or event or circumstance. The Savior says—"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." God has an object and a purpose respecting all things. And he says "My counsel shall stand; and I will do all my pleasure." They, who know any thing of God, must know that his pleasure extends to all things and that he will do what he pleases.

3. The servants of God are persuaded, that he will do respecting all things what is best. They can desire nothing greater, or wiser, or better in any respect than what they are assured God will perform. They can have no reason, nor any desire to keep any thing to themselves, if it were possible, against the purpose of God. They have an heart to say, "It is the Lord; let him do as seemeth him good." Jesus Christ said to the Father,—"Not my will, but thine be done." The will of God, in respect to all things, is wisest and best.

4. They, who withhold any thing from God, can do nothing to any good purpose. They can prosper in none of their designs and exertions. They can have no light in their minds. They find no joy, nor peace in their hearts. While they regard themselves more than God and attempt to withhold any thing from him, they have the spirit of Cain, of Achan and of Judas, of Annanias and Sapphira. And they must be like the troubled sea. It is written, — "Woe unto him, that striveth with his Maker."

5. The faithful servants of God, by withholding nothing from him, enjoy all things. God, in his greatness and goodness, in his beauty and happiness, becomes the object of their affection and enjoyment. And while they have true faith in God, they enjoy all things. They, who turn from themselves unto God, turn from dust and ashes to the fountain of living waters.

From the subject before us it may be observed.

1. That it is easy to see in what the saving conversion of sinners consists. It consists in turning from themselves unto God. All mankind are by nature wholly selfish; and their selfishness is sinful. That any person become pious, it is necessary that there be a change in the nature of his affections from selfishness to benevolence. With such a change in his heart, he will turn from himself to God. To true converts and to real christians God is the supreme object of confidence and delight.

2. Nothing, but his own selfishness, ever prevents any person from becoming truly pious. They, who are not the true friends and servants of God, desire that he would submit himself and all things to their selfish interests. And they refuse to submit any thing to God. Such is their spirit and conduct. With such a spirit they hate and oppose God and his law, Jesus Christ and the gospel; and they resist and prevent their own conversion and salvation.

3. No person can conceal his real character. The difference between a person's acting for God and acting for himself is too great to be hidden. No one can conceal his character from God. Nor can a person conceal his character from himself. Nor can any one be long unknown to his fellow creatures. But there are times of special and thorough trial. Such is the present

time in many respects, beyond what was ever before known on earth. The trials of religious professors now are like the last great trial of Abraham. How then can any person now conceal his real character?

4. Practical self-denial is the only evidence of piety. Professions of piety afford no evidence of Christian character. Nor does an attendance on religious performances. Nor do internal affections and the excitement of the feelings on religious subjects. Nor do any religious sentiments, enjoyments, exertions, or sacrifices, without real and practical self-denial, from supreme love to God and true love to man.

5. In the spirit of faithfulness to God, his servants find no difficulty in the performance of any duty. So far as they have this spirit, they have no selfish interests, nor desires, nor feelings to prevent the instant and cheerful performance of what God requires. It is written "Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing." The Lord Jesus Christ says — "My yoke is easy and my burden is light." No duty is ever done, while the heart is not right with God. When the heart of a person is truly turned to God, his affections agree with his duty. When Abraham had a heart to withhold nothing from God, he could arise early, go to the distant mountain and offer Isaac, whom he greatly loved, unto God whom he loved with supreme affection.

6. The wickedness of such persons, as are not pious, is very wonderful. They oppose God. They exalt themselves against him. They have no reason for their conduct. They act against the most powerful and affecting motives. In the spirit of selfishness they destroy themselves forever. Enmity, folly and madness are in their hearts.

7. They, who are not pious, are called to turn to God without delay. Abraham obeyed the voice of God in early life. He obeyed him all his days to old age. God has called you in your childhood and in your youth. You have delayed and refused to obey him. Why have you done so? Have you more knowledge, or power, or goodness, or wisdom than God? Why then have you set yourselves against him? — He still calls you in the greatness of his mercy. You may yet hear and turn and live. — "Turn ye: turn ye: for why will ye die?"

II.

HAPPY MARRIAGE.

And Isaac brought her unto his mother Sarah's tent and took Rebekah and she became his wife ; and he loved her : and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

GENESIS, XXIV. 67.

BUT few events which are mentioned in the Scriptures, are more particularly and circumstantially narrated than those which were connected with the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah.

1. There is a statement of Abraham's conduct respecting the marriage of his son. He called his eldest servant, who managed all his affairs, and put him under a most solemn oath respecting the selection of a wife for Isaac. He forbid his marriage with any daughter of the Canaanites ; but required his servant to go to his native country and take a wife unto his son from his kindred. In this prohibition and requirement Abraham was influenced by religious considerations. On this subject Abraham expressed an high degree of confidence in God and in the ministry of angels. Such was the conduct of this faithful servant and true friend of God respecting the marriage of his son.

2. There is an account of the conduct of Abraham's servant, whom he sent to obtain a wife for Isaac. He did not delay a proper attention to this subject. But after all his diligence and exertion on his journey, he prayed unto God for direction and success in the object for which he had been sent. And he accounted such success a great kindness. For providential direction and assistance, he rendered to God the most solemn and grateful acknowledgments. He " bowed his head and worshiped the Lord. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master

of his mercy and his truth : I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren." Though he doubtless needed refreshment and food was ready for him, yet his mind was so intent on the object of his journey, that he would not eat until he had told his errand. Similar were his decision and faithfulness in respect to his return, when he had obtained the object for which he was sent.

3. The conduct of Rebekah's relatives respecting her marriage is worthy of consideration. When they had heard the statement of Abraham's servant, they said, "The thing proceedeth from the Lord ; we cannot speak unto thee bad, or good. Behold, Rebekah is before thee ; take her and go and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken." For such conduct in favor of his object, the servant again worshiped God with reverence and gratitude. The cheerful consent of her relatives for the departure of Rebekah from her home did not arise from the want of esteem and affection for their daughter and sister. They accounted her marriage to be so evidently and favorably under the direction of divine providence, that they ought cheerfully to sacrifice the benefits and enjoyments which they might have received from her society and services. When she departed, with the most tender expressions of their friendship and love, they invoked upon her the greatest blessings.

4. We may notice the conduct of Rebekah. She was acquainted with the message and proposal, that were brought by Abraham's servant respecting her marriage to his son. Though it seemed to be decided by the events of divine providence and in the judgment of Abraham's servant and Rebekah's relatives, that she was to be the wife of Isaac, yet her brother and mother said, "We will call the damsel and inquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go." The considerations, which had influenced and governed Abraham and his servant and the relatives of Rebekah respecting her marriage, appeared to afford decisive reasons for her consent and her cheerful departure from her home to a distant residence. And it is a circum-

stance of pleasant interest, that she was attended by her nurse. Such a female acquaintance and companion must have been a great relief and comfort to her on her journey and in her residence among strangers. And it is no doubtful evidence of the excellence and amiableness of Rebekah, that her nurse was willing and pleased to attend her in the duties and trials of her future years. When the company had arrived at the end of their journey and Rebekah saw Isaac, she conducted with the highest degree of propriety, discretion and wisdom. Such an example of simplicity, innocence, modesty and piety in a young lady, in respect to her marriage, the Holy Spirit has been pleased to record and honor in the volume of divine truth, by the earliest of the inspired writers. And what greater honor and praise could be given on earth to any daughter of Adam?

5. The conduct of Isaac is then mentioned in respect to his marriage. When Abraham's servant returned with Rebekah, Isaac had gone "to meditate in the field at eventide." At the close of the day, his mind was withdrawn from earthly labors and cares; and as the solemn and pleasant evening approached, he was engaged in religious meditation. The review of his past life, the character of his father, the death of his mother, the mercies of God to Abraham and his numerous household, his own need of instruction and holiness, the measures which had been taken for his marriage, the importance of domestic relations and duties, the evils of misconduct in families, the honor and happiness of husbands and wives who live in the fear and favor of God and with mutual affection and kindness, the influence of his future conduct in respect to the knowledge and worship of God on earth, would urge upon his mind most solemn and affecting considerations for meditation, retirement and prayer. Such objects and subjects, there is reason to believe, engaged the attention of this worthy man, when at a distance he saw the camels with his father's servant and his company. "And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done." With what admiration, reverence and gratitude towards God, must Isaac have heard the servant's statement! With what esteem, honor and love to his father, must he have regarded the happy effects of

Abraham's concern for his marriage! He would also see, with candor and kindness, the wise and faithful conduct of the servant. And for a moment his beloved and lamented mother would arise before his mind and excite a desire, that she had lived to see her son blessed of God in his marriage with a worthy companion. "And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent and took Rebekah and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death." Whatever could be honorable and amiable in the person and character of a woman, would be associated in the mind of Isaac with his mother Sarah. She had been dead three years; and during that time Isaac had been afflicted and mourned for her death. Sarah was an hundred and twenty-seven years old when she died; and she is the only woman whose age is mentioned in the Bible. Though she was so aged, she was not despised nor disregarded by her son when he had arisen to manhood. How highly then should we estimate the filial character and conduct of Isaac, when tested by his affection for his mother? And what must have been the affection and enjoyment of Sarah in her beloved and worthy son? Did Isaac most honor his mother, or Rebekah, when he brought her into Sarah's tent? Such affection and respect for his mother were the most valuable preparation for his reception of Rebekah, in the important and endearing relation of his wife. The conversation of Isaac respecting his mother, under the affecting circumstances in which he received Rebekah, would show her his domestic character and prepare her for a respectful and cheerful acceptance of the station in which God had placed her in the family of Abraham. The esteem and affection of Isaac for female excellence and worthiness, that had begun in his infancy towards his mother and had been strengthened and matured until her death, were now most properly and happily transferred to Rebekah. "He loved her." His love to her was rational, religious and permanent. "And Isaac was comforted after his mother's death." For the bereavements and afflictions of faithful children in the death of their parents, the society, affection and happiness, which may be found in the formation of their domestic

relations, are the natural, rational and adequate consolations. The character of Isaac, as it appears from his sorrow for his mother and his affection for his wife, is as worthy of admiration and imitation as any social character that is presented in the Scriptures.

6. We may consider the providence of God in the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah. The marriage of his son must have often engaged the attention of Abraham, before the time of these events. But he was at this time, there is reason to believe, especially influenced to have this subject brought to a settlement. And his confidence in divine providence did not prevent nor delay proper measures for its accomplishment; but awakened and encouraged him to adopt and employ right means for this good purpose. His servant was especially favored in divine providence, in respect to the same object. He had reason to acknowledge, admire and praise the God of his master, in the minute and affecting circumstances by which he was assured of the divine kindness and mercy towards Abraham. God had shown himself to this servant to be faithful in his care and kindness to Abraham and his son. Every event and circumstance in the whole concern appeared to have been appointed and caused, according to the knowledge and power, the goodness and wisdom of God. So evident were the divine purpose and agency in the marriage of Isaac, that the relatives of Rebekah as well as herself and Isaac and the numerous servants and household of Abraham must have been deeply affected by these providential dispensations. And they must have perceived the duty and importance of piety in the transactions and relations, the interests and enjoyments of human existence and domestic society.

7. The happiness of Isaac's marriage with Rebekah may deserve our attention. Isaac had reason to account himself highly favored and blessed by the God of his father in the bestowment of so suitable and beloved a companion. Rebekah could have no reason to regret, that she was called to leave her native place, her mother and brother, the beloved companions of her early years and the pleasant and endeared objects of her youthful affections; for a connection which was so honorable and

so favored of God, "who hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of our habitation." Abraham must have received the highest degree of comfort and enjoyment in the marriage of his son. The happy and virtuous formation of domestic relations and the establishment of religious families are essential to the existence of purity, friendship, piety, order and peace on earth. When the most important connections, that can exist in human society, are formed in truth and love, in honor and wisdom, they are happy for man and they are approved and blessed of God. Such was the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah.

This account of their marriage affords the following observations.

1. We may perceive the importance of the domestic relations. These relations are suited to turn the natural affections and the interests, the enjoyments and afflictions of human beings in this life to the preservation and advancement of peace and kindness, of holiness and happiness. They are also suited to restrain and regulate the proud and selfish feelings of the human heart. Without the existence of families and their various relations and obligations, how could there be such parental affection as Abraham showed for Isaac, such filial affection as Isaac showed for his mother and such mutual esteem and affection, as existed between Isaac and Rebekah? How greatly do infants, children and youth need the love and care of parents! Nor less do parents need the esteem, honor and affection of their children. Without families how could there exist the affections and benefits, which arise from the relations of brothers and sisters and the other endearing connections and associations of domestic society? What foundation and preparation can there be for the order and happiness of civil and religious communities without the existence and influence of families? The condition of mankind, without domestic institutions and relations, would be worse than the most barbarous and cruel savagism. It would make the whole earth as Sodom and Gomorrah.

2. We may safely account marriage to be a divine institution. It is in its nature and effects far above the wisdom and goodness of man. It shows divine wisdom

and goodness in connection and in contrast with human folly and wickedness. Such an institution could have no origin, but from the perfections of God. Could marriage with its good and happy effects, be renounced and destroyed, the earth would be filled with corruption and violence. There would be no natural affection and sympathy ; there would be no mutual enjoyment of temporal and spiritual blessings ; nor would there be any kindness and comfort in afflictions and sorrows. We can have no reason to disown, or disbelieve the Bible, because it requires and sanctions marriage with domestic obligations, relations and duties. Infinite intelligence and benevolence created man, male and female and formed and appointed the relation of husband and wife. This divine appointment shows, against the ignorance and selfishness of man, that the religion of the Bible is most wisely and kindly suited to the character and condition of mankind in this life. Marriage ought to be regarded and honored in subjection to the instruction and government of God ; and to be observed and maintained in every community in the holy fear of God and with true love to man.

3. From the importance of domestic relations we may perceive the deceitful influence of anti-christian sentiments on this subject. Clerical celibacy, monasteries and nunneries, which have arisen in connection with Popery and been maintained by its influence, are anti-christian and equally against the social nature, duties and enjoyments of human beings. Yet they have existed under the profession of peculiar sanctity and devotion. Modern atheism and infidelity, which raise their objections against the religion of the Bible, chiefly on account of the delusions and abominations of Popery and other perversions of the gospel, reject the institution of marriage and the domestic relations under a profession of peculiar regard to liberty and humanity. But such conduct in infidels opposes the nature of man and his rational liberty and happiness, as much as it opposes the instructions and blessings of the Christian religion. Every anti-christian sentiment on the subject of marriage, whether it be professedly religious, or infidel, is opposed to the honor and happiness of man, as well as to the knowledge, worship and enjoyment of God. Errorists, from a pretended

regard to piety, may renounce humanity ; and infidels, from a pretended regard to humanity, may renounce piety : but every anti-christian sentiment is equally opposed to the highest glory of God and the best good of man. The religion of the Bible, in respect to domestic relations and all other objects, agrees with the song of the angels who praised God, saying, "Glory be to God in the highest ; and on earth peace, good will toward men."

4. In respect to marriage all persons ought to be influenced by religious principles and affections. Marriage is not merely a civil contract ; nor is it designed to answer the purposes of secular interest and political prosperity. It is designed to answer the purposes of infinite wisdom and goodness and mercy in the preservation and multiplication of the human family and in the existence and prevalence of holiness. When the ancient people of God had departed from him and incurred his displeasure, they were disposed to inquire why their services were rejected ; and by the prophet God gave the following answer : "Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously ; yet is she thy companion and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one ? Yet had he the residue of the Spirit. And wherefore one ? That he might seek a godly seed." Marriage between one man and one woman, in the true fear of God, is essential to the existence and prevalence of holiness in the rising generations of the human family.

5. We may perceive what is necessary to the progress and prevalence of the gospel in the earth. It is the spirit and practice of scriptural piety in families. The example of the apostle, in showing and teaching truth and duty from house to house, as well as publicly, has been disregarded in the general designs and exertions of the present day, for the instruction and conversion of all nations. The command of the Lord Jesus Christ requires and binds his disciples to preach the gospel to every creature, as well as to go into all the world. We may perceive the great and lasting effects of enlightened and practical piety in the family of Abraham. Let his example be followed by other parents in the marriage of their children and soon "shall all families of the earth be blessed." Amen.

XII.

D E A T H .

I know not the day of my death.

GENESIS, XXVII. 2.

THESE words were spoken to Esau by his father Isaac. The mind of Isaac appears to have been habitually and seriously turned to his removal from the world by death. And he was desirous to be prepared for that important and solemn event. Such ought to be the constant object and desire of all persons. For they know they must die from the common prevalence of death in all ages ; and from the sentence of death which God has passed upon the whole human family. Yet every person can say with Isaac, "I know not the day of my death." We are entirely dependent upon God for life ; and we cannot discover his will, or purpose respecting the number of our days ; or the time, the place, the manner, or any circumstance of our departure. Our desires, opinions, interests and expectations can avail nothing respecting the time of our death, so as to hasten or delay the solemn event. Yet there is reason to believe that God has fixed the day of every person's death. Isaac speaks, as if he thought the day of his death was fixed, though it was wholly unknown to himself. Job asks, "Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth ? are not his days also like the days of an hireling ?" Again he says, "Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months is with thee ; thou hast appointed his bounds, that he cannot pass." And again, "All the days of my appointed time, will I wait till my change come." From the universal government of God, it is evident that he has fixed the bounds of human life and the day of every person's death. Every instance of death is, in itself and in its connections and consequences, too important to be left in

uncertainty. Isaac, like every good and wise man, turned his attention to his own death and to a serious and practical preparation for that important event.

From his words in our text, it is proposed to mention several considerations, which are suited to teach and show us the importance of death in respect to all persons.

1. Death will remove us from the connections and relations of this life. These may have been continued, extended and strengthened for years ; or they may have been lately begun, with the tenderest affections and the most delightful prospects. But, by death, they will be dissolved in a moment and be severed forever.

2. Death will remove us from the objects and concerns of this world. Whether our affections and interests, our exertions and enjoyments have been confined to ourselves, or been supremely devoted to the glory of God and the progress of his kingdom on earth ; whether we have chosen for our portion the dreams and shadows of time and the dust and ashes of the earth, or have placed our hearts upon things heavenly and eternal ; this world with all its concerns will pass from us, at our death, in a moment.

3. On the day of our death our time of trial will be closed for eternity. Whether we are in childhood, or youth, in early manhood, or in the midst of our days, in the decline of life, or in old age, whether we be saints or sinners ; whether we be prepared for heaven or fitted for hell ; after the day of our death there will be no farther trial of our character.

4. At death our character will be formed and fixed for the decision of the final judgment. If at death we shall be numbered with the righteous, we shall be prepared to hear the supreme and final Judge say, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." But if at death we have the character of the wicked, we must hear him say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

5. As our character shall be, when we die, so will be our condition for eternity. On the day of our death we shall enter the torments of hell without relief or hope forever : or we shall be received into the presence and

kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ and be united with saints and angels in their enjoyments and praises world without end.

6. The day we shall die we shall know what will be our character and condition forever. The righteous then will have no more darkness, nor doubt, nor fear, respecting their salvation. And the wicked, at death, will be driven away in his wickedness from every prospect of good, from every means of grace and every gleam of hope.

The subject before us suggests the following reflections.

1. Since all mankind are subject to death, their condition in respect to this world is more equal than they commonly imagine. Though worldly possessions, enjoyments and honors be eagerly sought and be highly valued, they cannot prevent, nor delay the day of death. Nor do they remove or lessen, but rather increase the evils and terrors of that day. The richest miser and the poorest beggar, the proudest tyrant and the meanest slave, the gayest devotee of fashion and the sternest Stoic are constantly and equally under the sentence of death. They must soon pass from every external difference and distinction and become in the silent grave the food of worms.

2. It is unwise to place any great degree of dependence upon human beings. "Surely every man walketh in a vain show." Why should we trust in him, who is of yesterday and knoweth nothing? and whose life "is even as a vapor that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away"? However we may be disposed to trust in ourselves, or in our fellow creatures, it is the voice of kindness as well as of wisdom, which says, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of"? "Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm and whose heart departeth from the Lord." It is as dangerous as it is sinful to trust in man, who is at his best state altogether vanity.

3. No one can be relieved in respect to his own death, until he is truly submissive to the will of God. It is in God "we live and move and have our being." Our interests for this life and in the future state are in his hand.

He says, "See now that I, even I am he; and there is no God with me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal: neither is there any, that can deliver out of my hand." No one can have any true rest and peace in his mind, until he turns to God and submits himself with all his concerns to his will and pleasure. "Go to now, ye that say, to-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city and continue there a year and buy and sell and get gain; whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live and we shall do this or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil."

4. Since death is so important an event, a long life is to be accounted a great blessing. The changes and trials of many years are suited to promote the instruction, the holiness and happiness of human beings; and afford the most favorable opportunity to prepare for a peaceful dismission from the world and a joyful and triumphant entrance into the kingdom of glory.

5. They, who are prepared to die, are in a happy condition. They can adopt the words of the early Christians and say, "Whether we live we live unto the Lord; and whether we die we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." The same spirit of piety and of devotion to God, which prepares a person for death, prepares him for life. And happy is he, who can say, "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain."

6. They, who live without a practical preparation for death, are guilty of the greatest folly. For they live to no wise and proper purpose. They gain no real good in this life. And they prevent and abuse all their privileges and enjoyments and afflictions to fit themselves for death without hope, and for future and endless misery. To him, who resolved to say to his soul in his temporal prosperity, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry," God said, "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?"

7. Since the day of our death is so important and yet to us unknown, let every one be awakened and engaged

to prepare for this solemn event. "It is appointed unto men once to die ; but after this the judgment." What then should be our great and constant object, in the uncertain and precious moments of life ? " Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter ; Fear God and keep his commandments ; for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

XIII.

B E T H E L.

And he called the name of that place Bethel.

GENESIS, XXVIII. 19.

SCRIPTURAL history will forever interest the attention and engage the affections of all persons, who have any proper regard to their Creator, their fellow-creatures and themselves. For with perfect faithfulness and simplicity, it gives such an account of individuals, families and nations, as agrees with the events of Divine Providence and the character and condition of men in this life. Yet how humbling, as well as instructing and affecting is the history of human beings, as it is given in the Bible! Who would have expected in the family of Isaac and Rebekah such events as were connected with the departure of Jacob from his father's house, and from the tender friendship of his mother? And how little could Jacob have expected, on the evening after an event in itself so unhappy and painful, the divine appearance of glory and grace, with which he was blessed and honored at the place, which he was induced, with the highest reverence and gratitude to God, to call Bethel!

From the words of our text it is proposed,

I. To consider the circumstances of Jacob at the time of this divine appearance.

I. He had, on that day, left his home. Until this time, although he was more than forty years of age, it is probable he had resided with his parents. But now he was leaving the home of his childhood and youth and early manhood; and passing alone and sorrowful to the untried and doubtful scenes of his future pilgrimage. Every object and event of his early life would rise before his mind and affect his heart. The conduct of his father and mother towards his brother and himself; his own con-

duct and the many instances, in which he was sensible of improper and sinful feelings and actions would be reviewed by him with serious emotions. He would regret the advice of his mother and his own deceitful behavior towards Isaac, in order to obtain the blessing, which God had designed for himself, but which Isaac intended to bestow upon Esau. With what sorrow would he reflect upon the angry and murderous spirit of Esau, which had been excited against himself! During the travel of the long day on which Jacob left his home, the scenes and events, the actions, enjoyments and afflictions of forty years, as they had occurred in his father's family and in the circle of his acquaintance, would fill his memory with numerous reflections and his heart with tender affections. To a man in early life the first departure from his home, for the unknown scenes of some distant residence, is a most critical and affecting occurrence.

2. We may notice the present condition of Jacob at that time. His mother had seemed to hope, that an absence of a few days would be sufficient to remove the anger of Esau and prepare the way for Jacob's safe and peaceful return. But Jacob had probably seen too much of Esau's spirit to enjoy the hope of such an event. His father consented to his absence and confirmed the blessing, which he was persuaded God designed for the younger brother according to the purpose which he revealed to his mother at the birth of her sons. He also charged him to take a wife from the daughters of his mother's brethren; and invoked upon him and his seed the blessing of Abraham. But the faith of Abraham and Isaac had not yet pervaded the heart of Jacob. Nor was he then prepared to know the value of the blessing, which God had promised to Abraham and his seed. He might be disposed to contrast his condition with his father Isaac's in respect to marriage. To obtain a wife for Isaac a wise and faithful servant had been put under an oath and sent with rich treasures and joyful prospects. But Jacob now found himself walking alone without any attendant, without property, without employment and without any certain residence. Under such circumstances the promise of God to Abraham, the

prayers and blessing of Isaac and the fond and partial affection of Rebekah could afford him but little present relief. He could have no comfort, nor hope in himself; and he would be humbled and ashamed by the means, which had been used to obtain from his father the blessing against his brother. He might think his life to be of little worth and be very indifferent, whether he found some shelter for the night, or fested himself in the open air. Wearied by his journey and grieved by his reflections, "he lighted upon a certain place and tarried all night, because the sun was set: and he took of the stones of that place and put them for his pillow and lay down in that place to sleep." Such was the condition of Jacob the evening after he left his father's house.

3. The prospects of Jacob may engage our attention. If such were the past scenes of his life and if such might have been his views and feelings on the day he left his home, what would be his prospects and his hopes for future days and years? Before this time there is given but the smallest notice of Jacob's character. It was evident from what God had declared to Rebekah, that Jacob and his descendants should be very different from Esau and his descendants. And it is said, that "Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents;" and that "Rebekah loved Jacob." But Jacob was obliged to flee from the face of his brother, while Esau remained at home, was married, was prosperous in his secular interests and was wise, bold and joyful in his worldly pursuits. At the same time Jacob was without a home, without worldly prospects, without earthly possessions and was resting his head at night, after the fatigues and sorrows of the day, upon stones for his pillow in the open field. If such were the commencement of his journey and such the evening of his first day's absence from his father's house, what could he expect the next day and for future days and years? Who, that had lived forty years and should then find himself in the circumstances of Jacob, would not be disposed to question the flattering prospects of the world and to despair of any better portion on earth than vanity and vexation of spirit? The place and the manner of Jacob's lodging that night seem to have agreed with the state of his mind and with his future

prospects. With such reflections, in such a condition and with such prospects, he laid himself down in such a place to sleep. It is proposed,

II. To consider the manifestation, which God made of himself unto Jacob. Jacob had been assured that the God of Abraham and of Isaac should be his God; and that the blessing of God was the only worthy object of desire and delight. He might have been informed of the peculiar appearances and manifestations, which God had made to Abraham and Isaac. But it is not probable that God had then shown himself in a similar manner to Jacob. The peculiar circumstances of Jacob when he was leaving his home, afforded important reasons for God to reveal himself to him, according to his covenant and promise to Abraham and Isaac. And it may be observed,

1. That God manifested to Jacob his glorious agency in the dispensations of his providence. "And he dreamed and behold, a ladder set upon the earth and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending upon it." This representation was designed and suited to show the intercourse, which God maintains between heaven and earth. From the throne of his glory God has access to his people and is present in his providence with his servants and children at all times and in all places. Neither religious instructions, nor external dispensations can convey to the minds of men such a knowledge of God, as he gives to his people, when he makes his agency on earth in all the events of time, real and sensible to their spirits by peculiar manifestations of himself. In his intercourse with his people, God employs the holy angels, as it is written, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of salvation?" And it is maintained through the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ, who unites in his wonderful personage real divinity with real humanity and is "both God and man, in two distinct natures and one person forever."

2. God declared and showed himself to Jacob to be the God of Abraham his father, and the God of Isaac. Jacob had doubtless been informed of the peculiar conduct of God towards his pious ancestors and of their confidence

and obedience towards him. He might have often wondered why they should have conducted towards God in a manner, which was so different from the common conduct of mankind. Nor could he have known, without peculiar manifestations to himself, what God had shown himself to be to Abraham and Isaac and the importance and blessedness of his covenant with his holy and faithful servants. He had doubtless believed in the existence of God before this time and been persuaded of the doctrines, duties and blessings of religion. But he now had such a knowledge of God, as he had not before received ; and in view of his greatness and goodness, his glory and grace, he would cease to wonder at the faith and the conduct of Abraham and Isaac.

3. God showed himself to Jacob in his precious promises of future blessings. He said unto him, "The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth ; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south : and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." None but an almighty and unchangeable being of infinite wisdom and goodness could have revealed such designs, or have declared such promises to Jacob. They extended to future ages and to all nations. That being, who so appeared to Jacob when he was in such a state and in such a place, may truly be called the God of Jacob, as well as the God of Abraham and Isaac.

4. God revealed himself to Jacob in the assurance of his special presence with him through the future scenes and days of his life. He said, "Behold, I am with thee and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest and will bring thee again unto this land : for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." How little did Jacob then know of the future changes, labors, sorrows and mercies of his earthly pilgrimage ; and of the necessity and benefits of the instruction, protection, assistance and comfort, which he should receive from the special and promised presence and favor of God ! Such were the peculiar and glorious manifestations, which God made of himself to Jacob under the afflictive and humbling circumstances in which

he left his father's house and "lay down in that place to sleep."

III. It is proposed to consider the effects which were produced in respect to Jacob by this divine appearance.

1. It produced in Jacob a most thorough impression of the divine presence. "And Jacob awakened out of his sleep and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not." When he "lay down in that place to sleep," it is probable he had little thought of God and small faith and hope in his power and mercy. Nor had he ever had, before that time, such a knowledge and sense of the existence and presence of God, as were then revealed to his soul. All the powers of his mind and affections of his heart were now awakened to see the glory of God. And his existence, perfections and presence were as real and certain to the mind of Jacob as his own existence.

2. This divine appearance produced in Jacob a most affecting reverence towards God. "And he was afraid and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God and this is the gate of heaven." The holiness and majesty of God seemed to Jacob to fill and pervade the place. The holy fear of God awed his mind and removed every inferior object. God appeared as near to him as if he had been admitted into the entrance of heaven and been placed before the throne of his glory.

3. Jacob desired to perpetuate the remembrance of this divine appearance. "Jacob arose early in the morning and took the stone that he had put for his pillow and set it up for a pillar and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel." He desired to have the place marked and known by all the means in his power. On account of the manifestations, which God there made to Jacob, he believed that place would be associated in his affections with the most important and endearing impressions, as long as he should live.

4. He was induced most humbly to desire the divine presence and favor. "Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on,

so that I come again to my father's house in peace ; then shall the Lord be my God." Jacob was now sensible that all things belong to God and that all blessings come from him. He felt his entire dependence upon him and his unworthiness of any favor. He does not appear to have been elated, but rather humbled by the mercies God had shown him and by his great and precious promises. He desired first and above all things the presence and protection of God ; and limited his requests for temporal blessings to food and raiment and a peaceful return to his father's house. Such is the rational and happy influence of the spiritual and experimental manifestations which God makes to his people. With God for their friend and portion, they have moderate desires for earthly possessions. And in the love and favor of God, they have kind and tender affections towards their relatives and their fellow-creatures.

5. Jacob made a solemn devotion of himself to God. He vowed a vow and engaged that the Lord should be his God ; and the object of his supreme reverence, affection, confidence and enjoyment. And he consecrated the stone, on which he had laid his head to sleep and on which he had poured oil, to be a memorial of his devotion to the worship and service of God and of his covenant with him. He also engaged to acknowledge his dependence upon God and his obligations to him when he said, "Of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

The preceding considerations suggest the following remarks.

1. The condition of young men, on their entrance upon life for themselves, is very sorrowful. It is no small reason for sorrow, that they leave their homes and are removed from the affections and services, which none but parents can render unto their children. On such an event they find themselves alone and destitute ; and the world, on which they begin to enter, is a dark and dreary and dangerous wilderness. The past scenes of their homes are pleasant yet mournful to their souls. What place on earth can be as the home of our childhood ? What human beings can be to our hearts as our father and mother, brothers and sisters ? They are left

and must be left by every young man who enters upon life for himself. But what shall that life be? If it be sorrowful to leave what is past, it may be terrible to meet the future! How many young men, when they leave their homes, are as solitary and sorrowful as Jacob, when "he lighted upon a certain place and tarried there all night, because the sun was set."

2. At their entrance upon life for themselves the blessing of God is the one thing needful for young persons. Every human being needs, for his safety, honor and happiness in this life, that the Lord should be his God. But there is not a more important and critical period in human life, than the time young persons enter upon the world for themselves. They must then choose their objects, adopt their sentiments, select their companions and establish their habits. And without the instruction, guidance and comfort of religion they will take and keep the way of the wicked, which is as darkness. But if they have the friendship and blessing of God, all things shall work together for their good. O, that every child and youth would regard the words of the Lord Jesus Christ; "One thing is needful!"

3. The manifestations of God to his people are exceedingly glorious. They are made under such circumstances and with such connections and consequences, as produce the greatest and best effects. In their spiritual experience and in his providential dispensations, his people see and know him to be what he declares himself in the Scriptures. Every pious person has reason to say unto God, "Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O Lord, according unto thy word."

4. The spiritual experience of religion is a most evident reality. It formed the peculiar character of Abel and Enoch and Noah, of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Of his people God says, "I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord: and they shall be my people and I will be their God; for they shall return unto me with their whole heart." Their knowledge and enjoyment of God are not imaginary, enthusiastic, or superstitious; but rational, spiritual and experimental.

5. From the conduct of God towards Jacob we may perceive the importance of piety in families. He received

the knowledge and blessing of God through the examples, the instructions and influence of Abraham and Isaac ; and according to the divine covenant and promises. God commonly preserves the knowledge, practice and enjoyment of religion on the earth by the bestowment of his Spirit and blessing upon the children of his people. To Abraham God said, "I will be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee." And to his own people he says, "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed and my blessing upon thine offspring."

6. The great mercy of God to Jacob should induce all persons, on their entrance upon life for themselves, to hope and trust in his name. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob still lives. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is "a sun and shield ; he will give grace and glory ; and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." May he be to every young person "a refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

XIV.

DOMESTIC REFORMATION.

Then Jacob said unto his household and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you and be clean and change your garments ; and let us arise and go up to Bethel : and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress and was with me in the way which I went.

GENESIS, XXXV. 2, 3.

IN the verse before the text it is stated, that God called upon Jacob to arise and go to Bethel and make there an altar unto God, who appeared unto him when he fled from the face of Esau, his brother. This call reminded Jacob of the mercies he had received from God in a time of great distress ; and also of his religious engagements. And it seems to imply, that Jacob had been, in some measure, indolent respecting his duty and the spiritual interests of his family. By the call and command of God, Jacob was awakened to the moral state of his family, to the removal of offenses from his household and to the performance of his duty. The call of God and the conduct of Jacob place before us the following sentiment,

The reformation of religious families is highly important.

In our attention to this subject it is proposed,

I. To show when a family may be accounted religious.

For this purpose it is necessary,

1. That the head of the family should publicly and sincerely profess religion. If the instruction, government and conduct of a family be not under the influence of such a profession, it cannot have the appearance and reputation of religion, though some of its members should be truly pious. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, wherever they might sojourn, or reside, built altars unto God and

maintained, publicly and sincerely, a profession of real piety. And such was the conduct of other patriarchs.

2. A religious family regularly maintain the social worship of God. "Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and offered burnt offerings on the altar." This was his first social act after he left the ark. Jacob called on his household and all that were with him, to arise and go to Bethel to worship God. Joshua said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." After an account of Job's conduct in the worship of God with his family, it is added, "Thus did Job continually." The petitions in the Lord's prayer imply the daily worship of God in a social manner. Of Cornelius it is said, "He was a devout man and one that feared God with all his house and prayed to God alway."

3. In a religious family there must be the existence and practice of real holiness. Without supreme love to God and true love to men, without the holy fear of God and a proper regard to man, without repentance towards God and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ, without the presence and influence of the Holy Spirit, there is no real religion, or goodness in a family, or individual. So far as a family is religious, holiness has a prevailing influence in their sentiments and actions. It is proposed,

II. To show in what respects a reformation may be needed in religious families. The state and conduct of religious families may be different. And in these respects the same pious family is liable to changes. Who would have thought that there could have been strange gods among the household of Jacob? and that he could have known they were there and yet have been negligent of their removal? Religious families may greatly need reformation; and they commonly need to be reformed in the following respects.

1. Reformation may be needed respecting religious government, discipline and order. It requires a watchful eye, a steady hand and a faithful heart to maintain, in a family, the benevolent and powerful influence of real religion in this respect. So far as any member of a family is selfish, slothful and careless, he disturbs the peace and order of the house and counteracts and perverts the happy and lovely effects of religion. In a family without

religious government, there will be strange gods and strange lords.

2. A family may need to be reformed respecting the neglect and delay of important duties. The whole time and strength of a family and of all its members can do no more than meet and perform their duties as they rise. But the present performance of duty requires attention and exertion, watchfulness and decision, which never exist without self-denial. In families the present performance of duty is liable to continued interruption; and therefore they are always liable to neglect and delay some duty.

3. Reformation may be needed in religious families in respect to the commission of various offenses. The heart may be easily disturbed and the spirit wounded by some evil look, or unkind word, or selfish and careless act. And how commonly does one small evil produce greater evils! One offense after another may arise, until the spirit of holiness is removed and the family become lukewarm, unwatchful and disobedient in respect to the commands of God and their own actions and affections.

4. A religious family may need to be reformed in respect to their constancy and progress in the practice of holiness. If a family are not constant in the duties of religion, they will decline; and if they do not advance in religious attainments they will retreat, stumble and fall. God has often occasion to say to the heads of religious families, "Arise and go to Bethel." And they have often great reason to say to their households, "Remove the strange gods that are among you and be clean and change your garments and let us arise and go to Bethel." If religious families did not greatly need to be reformed, they would find a Bethel in every place. And of every place they might say, "This is none other than the house of God; and this is the gate of heaven."

It is now proposed,

III. To show that the reformation of religious families is an important object,

1. Such a reformation is the only proper acknowledgment they can make to God for the numerous mercies which they have received from him. God reminded

Jacob and he reminded his family of the great mercies they had received in former days. These mercies were urged as powerful and decisive reasons for a thorough reformation in his family. Let any religious family seriously review the mercies they have received ; and they will be disposed to inquire, What shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits ?

2. Reformation in families is the only suitable improvement of their afflictions. God afflicts and chastises his people, not for his pleasure, but for their profit, that they may be partakers of his holiness. " Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more : that which I see not teach thou me ; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more."

3. It is only by reformation that religious families can discharge their solemn and peculiar obligations. They have professed the name of God and devoted themselves to his service and praise. They have placed themselves under special bonds to walk in his commandments and ordinances blameless.

4. The reformation of religious families is necessary, in order to promote the general interests of religion. The effects of their sentiments and practices are not confined to themselves. Their example will have an influence as far as it is known ; and may extend beyond the limits of earth and time.

5. Religious families cannot, any farther than they are truly reformed, enjoy the blessing and presence of God. God cannot be graciously present with any family that depart from him ; nor can he bless those who sin against him. When Jacob arose and went to Bethel God appeared again to him and blessed him. Every family need the presence and blessing of God ; and they are enjoyed by religious families in proportion to their reformation and holiness.

The importance of reformation in religious families suggests the following observations.

1. The enemies of religion will attempt to corrupt religious families. Religion in families is the strongest barrier that can be raised against the rising floods of error and wickedness. If this barrier can be removed, or weakened, the enemies of truth and goodness can

prevail. Their object, therefore, is to induce the members of religious families to conform to the errors and sins of the world.

2. It is in religious families that declensions commonly begin in communities. If families were constant and faithful in the service of God, they would maintain the standard of holiness and happiness. But when religious families decline in their sentiments, affections and actions from truth and duty, impiety and irreligion extend their influence without rebuke and without restraint.

3. Without decided reformations in families, apparent reformations in communities will not be permanent. There may be extensive excitements on religious subjects and numerous professions of piety, but the permanent character of individuals and communities will agree with the moral conduct and condition of families. Such movements as do not reach and reform families, however powerful and promising they may seem to be, will soon subside.

4. Every person can form the most correct judgment respecting himself from his conduct in the family. There our principles and affections are most constantly tried and shown. There we are commonly the least influenced by other persons and act the most according to our own feelings.

5. Every member of a family should regard and discharge his domestic obligations. In families our influence is most constant and permanent. There we shall do and receive the greatest good, or the greatest evil.

6. The reformation of religious families should be a constant object of attention and exertion. Schools and churches, states and nations will be what families shall be.

I V.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

And Israel said, It is enough.

GENESIS, XLV. 28.

THIS he said, when he was persuaded, that his beloved Joseph, whom he had supposed to be dead many years, was yet alive. So afflictive had been the events that were connected with his supposed death, that his father "refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning." But in respect to these events he was relieved and satisfied, when he was assured Joseph was alive. "And Israel said, It is enough." Yet he then saw only to a small extent the happy connections of the providential dispensations, which had been so painful to his heart. From the words of the text may be derived the following sentiment,

The friends of God will be satisfied respecting the most trying events of his providence. To illustrate this sentiment, it is proposed,

I. To show why the events of providence may be very trying to the friends of God.

1. They may be so on account of the darkness that exists in their own minds respecting these events. Jacob was wholly ignorant and deceived in respect to Joseph, when he believed he was dead. He mourned for the supposed death of his son, when he was alive and was "governor over all the land of Egypt;" and when God was dealing with him in such a manner, as preserved his father and family from famine and death. When the friends of God attempt to discover the design and effects of his dispensations, they will find themselves in painful darkness. The Psalmist says to God, "Thy way is in the sea, and thy path is in the great waters and thy foot-steps are not

known." It is very trying to the children of God to be in such darkness respecting the most painful events of his providence.

2. The events of providence towards the friends of God often destroy their most pleasing prospects. They may have pleasing prospects respecting their temporal interests, their domestic relations and enjoyments, their Christian friends, the churches of Christ and the progress of his kingdom. But these prospects may be so changed and destroyed, that they can truly adopt the words of Job: "When I looked for good, then evil came unto me; and when I waited for light, there came darkness."

3. The events of providence often oppose their fondest affections. With tender affections pious persons regard their beloved relatives and connections. They often indulge serious and confident desires and hopes to be useful in the cause of God and to be blessings to their fellow-creatures. But they may soon be obliged to say, "My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart." The Psalmist says to God, "He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days." It is very afflictive to their hearts to be obliged to renounce the objects and purposes of their tenderest affections.

4. The events of divine providence are suited to humble their spirits. To break and subdue their proud and selfish spirits requires many heavy strokes and painful changes from the hand of God. They must have thorns in the flesh and be buffeted by messengers of Satan, lest they should be exalted above measure. The Psalmist says unto God, "When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth." Deeply wounding are the events, which are necessary to humble their hearts, so that they shall be still and know for ever, that the Lord is God; and that they are nothing and worse than nothing.

II. It is proposed to show, that the people of God will be satisfied respecting the most trying events of his providence.

1. They will perceive that God had, in these events, a faithful regard to their highest interests. In their trials he takes the wisest method to promote their knowledge,

holiness, usefulness and happiness. And they will perceive that he causes all things, in their connections and consequences, to work together for their good. So that all tears shall be wiped from their eyes : and their sorrow shall be turned into joy.

2. In the most trying events, God pursues the great purpose of redemption. Of Jesus Christ the Apostle declares, that "all things were created by him and for him"; and that he is "the head over all things to the church." Every saint is a member of the church, of which Christ is the head. In his designs and conduct towards each saint, God regards his whole redeemed family. In his conduct towards Abel and Enoch, Noah and Abraham, Jacob and Joseph and every other pious person, God designs to promote the interest of his kingdom in all ages. The events, which were so painful to Jacob, were designed to promote the salvation of his pious descendants through the periods of time and the holiness and happiness of the millions, who shall be redeemed from the earth. How light and transient will the trials of Jacob and the sorrows of Job appear, when compared with their great and happy effects in their connection with the purpose and work of redemption!

3. In the events of his providence, however evil in themselves, God regards the highest interests of the universe. His own glory in his holy kingdom is his supreme object in the wonders of creation and providence. To this object he makes all the movements of this world to be subservient. Every event that exists, is connected in the counsel and work of God with the interests and glories of his eternal kingdom. In their communion with God and in the possession and enjoyment of all things, his people will be more than satisfied; they will be gratified and triumphant respecting their troubles and sorrows on earth.

4. By the most trying events of his providence, God manifests his perfections. By their trials, with their effects, his people learn and know that he is the Lord; that he is what he declares himself to be; that there is no other god and that there is none like him. But in no other way does it appear to be possible for God, so fully and clearly to manifest his power, knowledge, goodness,

wisdom and sovereignty. It is by their knowledge and enjoyment of God, as he shows himself to his people by the trying events of his providence, that they are instructed and prepared to be forever satisfied with his perfections, designs and works.

This subject offers the following remarks.

1. It is very unwise to judge the ways of God by the ways of man. His objects are infinite and eternal. But the objects of men are confined to themselves and are but for a moment. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." By the apostle it is written, "The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." Why then should we, in our weakness and folly, sit in judgment upon his power and wisdom? "Ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock; his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment; a God of truth and without iniquity; just and right is he."

2. The people of God will be most thankful to him for their severest trials. The events by which they have been most afflicted and humbled, will be instrumental of their highest happiness and exaltation. Their greatest light and joy, in the knowledge and favor of God, will arise from the scenes and events of the greatest darkness and sorrow. What Jacob once thought to be most against him, he found to be most in his favor. To the people of God the greatest good will arise from the existence of the greatest evil. And they will praise God, in their loudest and sweetest songs, for such trials as were the most painful and humbling to their hearts.

3. The future state of the righteous will be exceedingly glorious. By their redemption God will most perfectly manifest his perfections and gratify his infinite and eternal goodness. His glory and happiness in his people will be their glory and happiness forever and ever. And they will sing a song, which none can learn but they who are redeemed from the earth.

4. We may perceive the only way for such persons as are not truly pious, to obtain real and permanent happi-

ness. It cannot be found from any resources or exertions within themselves. It cannot be found in the pursuits and enjoyments of this world. It cannot be found in creatures. It can be found only in God and in the wonders of his power and wisdom and mercy. They who turn to God and submit themselves to his wise and holy government, will rejoice to say in life and in death and forever, "It is the Lord; let him do as seemeth him good." Amen.

XVI.

DEATH OF AGED PERSONS.

And the time drew nigh that Israel must die.

GENESIS, XLVII. 29.

WHEN Joseph introduced his father to Pharaoh, he said unto Jacob, "How old art thou?" And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been and have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." So affecting and sorrowful was Jacob's account of his past life! From the time he gave this account he "lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years. And the time drew nigh that Israel must die." Though Jacob called the days of his years few and evil, yet he was an aged man, when the time of his life is compared with the days, which mankind generally live. And now the time that he must die was near. From the text it is proposed to consider the following observation, The time of their death is near to aged persons.

On this subject it is proposed,

I. To show in what death consists. And it may be observed,

1. That it does not consist in the annihilation of the rational spirit. The human spirit is essentially different from matter. For it possesses intelligence, sensibility and consciousness; which are not properties of material existence. Nor is a connection or union with matter necessary to the existence of a rational spirit. Such a spirit may exist when it is not confined to the human body. But neither the human body, nor any other material existence can be made intelligent, sensible and conscious. It is the spirit which sees, hears and feels through the organs of perception and sensation. But without the

spirit there can be no intelligence, nor sensibility by any possible modification of material existence. Though the body, at death, ceases to manifest the sensations and actions of the spirit; yet there is no reason to believe that the spirit does not exist when the body dies.

2. Death does not consist in the removal of the spirit to an insensible condition. There is no evidence from the nature of the spirit, nor from its conscious connection with the body before it dies, nor from experience and observation, that the human spirit ever does exist in total insensibility. Consciousness of its own existence appears to be inseparable from an intelligent and sensible spirit. The scriptures certainly teach and show, in the fullest and plainest manner, that when the body dies the spirit passes into a state of increased and invigorated sensibility.

3. Death consists in the temporary separation of the spirit from the body to which it belongs. It is the body dies. And the body is dead because the spirit, which is capable of perception and sensation, departs from it and leaves it, as matter must be in its own nature, unintelligent and insensible.

II. It is to be shown why all persons must die.

The union between the human spirit and body is intimate and wonderful. They are so formed and connected, that it would seem as if they would be and ought to be, naturally, inseparable. Why then must all persons die?

1. They must die on account of the decays of nature, which exist in connection with human sinfulness. There is reason to believe that mankind might have been preserved from painful labors and anxious cares, from weakness, sickness and decay; and that they would have been so, if they had not become sinful and subject to the divine displeasure. But in their present sinful state they are subject to such evils, as must weaken and destroy the action of the spirit through the body. Whenever the body is so worn, wearied, sickened, or decayed, that the spirit cannot use it, in any degree and manner, for its agency, the spirit leaves it and it is lifeless.

2. All human beings must die on account of the sentence which God has passed upon all men. God has formed the union that exists between the human body

and spirit ; and he preserves it. And he can dissolve this connection whenever he pleases. But he would not have dissolved it, by such a humbling and painful change as the death of the body, if mankind had not become sinners. It is written, "By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Every human being is under the sentence of death from its birth by the sovereign and righteous judgment of God.

3. All persons must die for the accomplishment of the divine purposes respecting mankind. God has designs respecting the human family, that extend beyond the bounds of time and require their removal into the world of spirits. For the accomplishment of his designs it is necessary, that all men should finish their term of trial and pass by death into the future and endless state.

III. To aged persons the time of their death is near.

1. It is near when it is compared with what it was in their early days. To some aged persons death was once at the distance of a hundred years ; but now the time of their death may be within a few days, or hours, or even minutes. To every aged person the time of his death has become near, by the whole number of the days of his life. Once they, who are now aged, had to travel on the tedious journey of life for the long time of seventy, or eighty, or ninety years ; but now they have to move, or to be moved, only a few hours, before their pilgrimage is finished forever. How near, then, is the time of death, when compared with what it was once, to every aged person !

2. The time of death must be near to the aged on account of their natural condition. Once they had the animation and sprightliness and cheerfulness of childhood and youth ; the confidence and energy of early manhood ; and the dignity and influence of middle life. But now their eye is dim, their arm is weary, their step is slow and their voice trembles. Their courage fails and the cares of an hour are a heavy burden. The day of their power is gone. Their names are not known in the active scenes of life. Few ask, how they do, or whether they are alive.

3. To the aged the time of their death must be near,

on account of their moral character. Through the many days and long years of their lives they have been constantly and rapidly fitting for their eternal existence. Once they of the righteous, who are aged, had taken only a few steps in the way to heaven and by faith saw the mansions of glory beyond the numerous and distant mountains. Now the mountains have been passed and the heavenly city is within their daily prospects. Once the aged, who have walked in the broad way, were halting, doubting and trembling between their choice of heaven and hell; but now they have become stupified by delusion, hardened in wickedness and must soon be destroyed without remedy. The moral character and condition of the aged, whether they have been forming themselves into vessels of wrath or vessels of mercy, show that the time they must die is very near.

IV. It is proposed to show the peculiar importance of death in respect to aged persons. Their death is important,

1. In proportion to the connections which they have sustained in this life. The persons, the objects and events with which they have been connected, have been numerous and various according to their number of years. They had some distant connection with the aged who were alive at their birth, with those who were then in the midst of their days and with the youth and children who were then rising into life. They have also been connected with the multitudes who have entered this world after themselves. Their connections in this life have given an interest and importance to the existence of the aged on earth and will give an equal importance to their death.

2. Their death will be of special importance on account of the effects that will arise in this world by their removal from it. The interests, the objects and persons, with which they have been concerned during the many years of their lives, will be affected by their deaths. They have been as barriers and bounds, in respect to many designs and movements that could not be accomplished while they were preserved in life. They have often been preserved to close important objects and scenes in the movements of divine providence. And their removal is

often followed by a new series of providential arrangements and dispensations. The aged have lived for the conclusion of former scenes and movements; and they die for the commencement of future scenes and movements in this world of wonders.

3. Their death is important in proportion to the consequences which will exist in the future state from their conduct in this life. The effects of human conduct on earth, though they may continue and increase for ages, are light and transient, when compared with the effects that will arise in eternity from their conduct in time. Every action, word and thought of all persons in this life will continue and increase in its connections and consequences, in the future state forever. The longer any persons may have lived, the more extensive and momentous will be the effects of their conduct when they shall have died, in respect to themselves, their fellow-creatures and their Creator. By all the persons, movements, events and acts, that exist in time, God pursues his eternal purposes and produces effects which will never cease, nor lessen. What, then, must be the effects that shall arise in the future state from the lives and deaths of aged persons!

V. It is proposed to mention the duty of aged persons in respect to their removal from this world by death. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob have left examples of proper conduct in aged persons, on the near approach of death. In respect to the aged the influence of their character and the effect of their example often depends, in a great measure, upon their conduct near the close of life. It is very desirable that they, who have lived long, should die well and have a peaceful and happy death. Though the life of Jacob had been afflictive and sorrowful on many accounts, his death was peculiarly honorable, triumphant and happy. That the aged may perform their duty in respect to their death,

1. They should be sensible of the nearness and importance of this event. They must know that the time of their death is near; but they do not always consider the importance of their removal from this life. Aged persons often think that the continuance of their lives is of little importance; and that no great degree of interest can

attend their death. But what the people said to David may sometimes be truly said to an aged person, "Neither if half of us die, will they care for us; but now thou art worth ten thousand of us." The death of aged persons is commonly important in proportion to the number of their days. The aged should not think that there is little importance in their lives, or in their deaths, when it is certain that they live and that they die for the purposes of infinite goodness and wisdom.

2. The aged should withdraw themselves from those concerns which might prevent a suitable preparation for their dying hour. They ought not to be depressed by the past events and evils of life, nor to be anxious and troubled about their future days on earth. Their lives are in the hands of God. They should not be unhappily affected by the new and strange movements and events that seem to arise in the church and in the world. All power in heaven and in earth is given unto the Lord Jesus Christ. Though the aged die, God lives; and he will perform his promises to his servants and his children and he will accomplish his great and sovereign, his wise and holy purposes. Let the aged withdraw their minds from what might grieve and trouble their spirits; and wait and watch, with confidence and comfort, for their departure from this life.

3. They should do for other persons what is proper for the aged to do. They may yet communicate instruction by their words and actions. Though what they may say and do may appear little in itself, it may be great in its effects. They should arrange, settle and close, as far as possible, every interest and object, which has been intrusted to themselves. A few words spoken, or written, by aged persons, may give relief and help on important subjects. Though the aged ought not to be anxious and troubled about any thing, they ought to be wise and faithful in all things. And they ought to desire and do what may be suited to afford a blessing and comfort to those who must perform the labors and meet the conflicts of life, after they have gone the way from which they shall not return.

The subject before us offers the following remarks.

1. Aged persons ought to be treated with peculiar

affection. They are wonderful monuments of divine power, wisdom, mercy and faithfulness. And they are proper objects of special interest and affection for what they have long been in this life, for what they must soon be in death and for what they will be forever. We are apt to turn our affections from the aged to the young. But the aged have the first and strongest claim. Let none, then, be impatient, unkind and weary in respect to the aged.

2. Aged persons ought not to be impatient to leave this world. Their characters are not finished, nor are their duties done, while God preserves their lives. They have dying duties to perform. And these duties are great and solemn. Job said, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come." The aged have need of patience and they have reason for patience and submission to the divine will. Their days are numbered and will soon be finished.

3. The aged should not indulge the opinion, that they are useless in this life. They are prone to indulge this gloomy opinion, when they are obliged to desist from the public and active scenes of time. And they are sometimes treated as if they were preserved in life to no good and useful purpose. But such views and actions are impious towards God, are hurtful to man and unkind to the aged.

4. We should not desire to hurry the aged from the present state. The longer they have lived the more important and precious are the remaining moments of their lives. And the more interesting and affecting will be their death and its immediate and everlasting consequences. Who can dare, or desire to hurry their fellow-creatures, whom God has so long preserved in life, to their final hour on earth and into the untried realities of eternity?

5. They who are now in early life ought to be engaged to prepare for old age. Every young person ought to desire a long life; and he ought to hope for it. And he ought to act as if he should live many years; and to conduct in such a manner, that his life may be wise, holy and useful and his death honored and happy.

6. They who have been preserved to old age, have

reasons for peculiar gratitude to God. They have seen his great and special care, mercy and kindness towards themselves for many years. And still they need great and special mercies from God. Becoming gratitude for past mercies is the right and the best method they can take to obtain and enjoy the mercies they now need and will need forever.

7. The death of an aged person is a very affecting event. It must be so to themselves and to their immediate connections. It must deeply affect the communities in which they have lived and have been known for many years. And how solemn must be their entrance into the world of spirits!

8. All other persons owe important duties to the aged. Every aged person ought to respect other aged persons. The ministers of the gospel are under bonds of special attention and service to the aged. And all Christians should be respectful and affectionate to those persons who have been so long in life and must be soon in death. Let children and youth regard with esteem and affection those persons whom God has regarded and preserved in infancy and childhood, in youth and manhood, in middle life, in the decline of years and even unto old age. God says by Moses, "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head and honor the face of the old man and fear thy God : I am the Lord."

9. The aged should be thankful and joyful that there is a foundation in the gospel for confidence, comfort and hope in death. May they be prepared and enabled to say, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

XVII.

J O S E P H .

But as for you, he thought evil against me ; but God meant it unto good.

GENESIS, L. 20.

WHEN these words were spoken by Joseph, he was deeply affected by the conduct of his brethren and by the conduct of God towards himself. He clearly saw, that in the same events, in which their design was evil, the design of God was good. While his mind was comforted, by the subjection of their evil conduct to the good conduct of God, he desired that his brethren might, by the same reason, obtain relief and comfort. He had before said to his brethren, "Be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither ; for God did send me before you to preserve life." And again, "God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you, that sent me hither, but God." When his brethren came to him, after the death of their father and confessed the evil they had done and asked him to forgive their sin, "Joseph wept, when they spake unto him." His mind was so filled by the good conduct of God towards him, that he could not be troubled by their evil conduct. Nor could he bear that they should be so grieved before him. "And Joseph said, Fear not ; for am I in the place of God ? But as for you, ye thought evil against me ; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not ; and I will nourish you and your little ones. And he comforted them and spake kindly unto them." Joseph's view of his brethren's conduct in subjection to the conduct of God had a powerful and happy influence upon himself and was suited to have a

similar influence upon their affections and actions. The text then warrants the following doctrine, It is highly useful to perceive, that the designs of men to do evil are subject to the good designs of God.

To illustrate this doctrine, it is proposed,

I. To show why men may design to do evil.

1. They never design to do evil, because they are compelled to do it. The conduct of men in their affections, designs and acts is voluntary ; and it cannot, in its nature, be subject to any compulsive influence. So far as any effect is produced by compulsion, it is not of a moral character and cannot be morally good, or evil. The evil conduct of men can never be the effect of compulsion. Nor,

2. Do they ever do evil, because they do not know the essential difference between good and evil. There is an essential and immutable difference between benevolence and selfishness, holiness and wickedness. And this difference every person, who possesses common sense, is able to perceive, though it may not, in every instance of his conduct, be perceived on account of inattention and selfishness. No one ever intends to do evil, because he cannot know the nature of such conduct. Nor,

3. Do men ever design to do evil, because they can ever justify any evil design. A design to do evil is forever criminal and deserves to be condemned for its intrinsic sinfulness. Men may always know, when they design and desire to do evil, before it is done, that they cannot justify such conduct, as well as they may know, after it is done, that it admits of no justification. Nor,

4. Do they design to do evil, because they can ever gain any real benefit to themselves by evil conduct. Evil conduct is commonly committed in order to obtain some supposed benefit. But they, who design and do evil, always injure themselves, and must suffer forever the bitter effects of their conduct, if God does not for his own sake interpose for their deliverance and salvation.

5. Men never do evil because they design and desire to accomplish the good designs of God. Every evil design and desire is totally and directly opposed to what is good. No one ever can, in a design to do evil, desire to

accomplish a good object. In the evil designs of men, by which God means to do good, they never mean nor desire to promote his good designs. Joseph's brethren did not mean to promote the good, which God meant to do, by their evil conduct. Why then do men ever design to do evil? This question seems to admit of only one answer, which is,

6. That they design to do evil, that they may indulge and gratify their own evil feelings. The hearts of men are by nature full of evil and madness is in their hearts. They have no delight in what is good. They call evil good and good evil. In their evil designs they act from the spirit of selfishness and folly. There can be no good and wise reason for the love and practice of evil. It is written, "The foolishness of fools is folly."

II. It is proposed to show, that the designs of men to do evil are subject to the designs of God to do good.

1. God cannot be indifferent respecting the designs of men to do evil. Their designs, actions and affections are objects of his constant attention. He searches their hearts; he tries their reins; he weighs their actions; he hears and records every word they speak. He requires that they should be constantly and perfectly holy. Can he then be indifferent in respect to any of their designs?

2. His good designs are not subject to their evil designs. For his designs were formed in the eternal counsel of his own will. But their designs are formed in the fleeting moments of their transient existence on earth. His designs agree with his knowledge, power, goodness and wisdom. Their designs agree with their ignorance, weakness, wickedness and folly. Can the designs of God be subjected to the designs of man?

3. God includes the designs of man in his designs. For his designs are universal. They extend to all creatures and things, to all actions and events. "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand." And again, He "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

4. It is evident from the conduct of God, that the evil designs of men are subject to his good designs. They were so in respect to Joseph's brethren. Their evil designs were subject to the good designs of God. So were

the designs of Ahab, of Haman, of Judas and the murderers of the Lord Jesus Christ. What they meant for evil in their wicked designs and conduct, God meant for good.

5. That the designs of men to do evil are subject to the good designs of God is evident from the perfections of his character. His knowledge, power, goodness, wisdom, holiness and sovereignty enable, dispose, and oblige him to hold all men with their desires, designs and actions, under his supreme and glorious government and most wise, holy and powerful agency. God asserts and proclaims his universal agency and the accomplishment of his purposes to prove and show, that he is God.

III. It is to be shown that it is highly useful to perceive that the designs of men to do evil are subject to his good designs.

1. Such a knowledge of the divine designs is necessary to proper conduct towards God. Modern Infidels and Atheists say, There is no such intelligent, benevolent and almighty being as Christians call God ; for such a being could if he would and he would if he could, prevent the existence of evil. But according to the purpose and conduct of God, as taught in his word and shown by his works, he manifests his almighty power and infinite goodness by the existence of evil and the great and good effects, which he causes to rise from its existence. He shows himself to be God by the very designs and works, which Infidels declare to be inconsistent with his perfections. "Let God be true, but every man a liar." God said to Pharaoh, "And in every deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power ; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth." By his purpose and conduct in the existence of evil, God manifests his greatness and goodness, his holiness and sovereignty more fully and clearly than by any other method, that is possible, or conceivable even with God himself. In this way he does not merely do as well as he can do, but as well as he would do ; and he does what is as much greater, wiser and better than could be done if evil did not exist, as he is above all other beings. Absolute and universal sovereignty in his purposes and agency are essential to the divine nature and perfections ; and to the duty which

creatures owe to their Creator, Sovereign and Judge. A denial of the divine purposes, agency and sovereignty in the existence of evil limits every divine perfection and opposes the goodness as well as the power, the holiness as well as sovereignty of Jehovah. The very *name* and *nature of God* denote and imply *supremacy*. If the good designs of God are not above the evil designs of man, he is not the Sovereign of the Universe, but is subject to human ignorance and weakness, wickedness and folly. If the true knowledge, worship and enjoyment of God are useful, it is useful to perceive and know, that his good designs are above the evil designs of men ; and that what they mean for evil he means for good.

2. It is necessary to perceive, that the evil designs of men are subject to the good designs of God, in order to understand the gospel. In respect to the gospel, there can be but two schemes of doctrine. One scheme is, that the purpose and work of God in redemption are subject to the existence of moral evil. The other scheme is, that the existence of moral evil is subject to the purpose and work of God in redemption. The first scheme implies, that since moral evil has entered the universe, according to the independent and self-caused determination and agency of moral agents, God now intends to do the best he can, by means and motives, without any encroachment upon the liberty and independence of his enemies, for their instruction, holiness and happiness. This scheme supposes it might have been as well, if no evil had ever existed ; but that evil is incidental to any possible system of created existence ; and that God, in the counsel of his own will, was subject to a choice of difficulties ; either the difficulty of having no proper subjects of moral government, or the difficulty of having such subjects, as might, in their liberty and independence, rebel against his government. The second of these difficulties, it is supposed, in the scheme before us, God selected and that the purpose and work of redemption, according to this gospel, are subject to the existence of moral evil. The other scheme is, that the existence of moral evil is subject to the purpose and work of God in redemption. In order to know which of these schemes agrees with the true gospel of God, it is necessary to perceive, whether the

good designs of God are subject to the evil designs of men, or their evil designs are subject to his good designs. The whole system of divine truth and the whole purpose and work of God in creation, providence and redemption must be understood, explained, believed and professed according to one, or the other of those two schemes of doctrine.

3. In order to the advancement of saints in religion, it is useful to perceive that the evil designs of man are subject to the good designs of God. According to this doctrine God may be seen, known, loved and enjoyed amidst the dark and humbling scenes, that exist on earth and in view of all the moral and natural evils, that ever come into existence. If the goodness of God in his designs and works be perceived in the evil designs and works of man, every creature, event and circumstance, that ever exists, may serve to promote the instruction, holiness, usefulness, happiness, glory, beauty and strength of his people. But if the designs of God are subject to the evil designs of man, his friends must be involved in darkness, sorrow and shame; and every pious person may be obliged to say, "as with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?" But they, who know God, can say, "our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he pleased." In his light they can see light in darkness; from him they can gain strength in weakness and be filled with hope, peace and joy. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him, that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, *Thy God reigneth!*"

4. The doctrine, that God means for good what men mean for evil, is suited to be highly useful to sinners. It is suited to show sinners the sovereignty of God and their dependence, his goodness and their wickedness and his wisdom and their folly. If sinners ever repent and turn to God, they will repent and turn to him in view of God and themselves, of his good designs and of their evil designs. And it is only in view of his goodness even in respect to their wickedness, they can perceive any foundation, or reason for their forgiveness and salvation. A knowledge of the good designs of God in the evil designs

of men will show sinners the nature and duty of repentance. And it is suited to preserve real penitents from despondence and misery and to afford confidence, comfort and joy to their afflicted and broken hearts.

What has been said on this subject suggests the following reflections.

1. Since it is from their own voluntary wickedness, that sinners design to do evil, they are always liable to be convicted of their evil conduct by their own consciences. They are conscious of their own feelings, actions and designs; and as soon as their consciences are awakened to pass a judgment upon their conduct, they will be sensible of their selfishness and ill desert and of the holiness, justice and goodness of God in their condemnation and punishment. The goodness of God in what they designed for evil will not remove, nor lessen, but greatly increase the sense and torment of their sin and guilt under conviction. The more clearly they perceive his goodness in his designs, the more will they be sensible of their wickedness in their opposition and enmity against him.

2. The true knowledge of the divine designs will remove every objection against the conduct of God. In all his conduct God designs and performs what is good and what is best. He causes the wickedness of man to be subservient to the purposes of his goodness and their folly to manifest his wisdom. The Psalmist says unto God, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." In their ignorance and wickedness sinners are always disposed to contend and complain against the designs and conduct of God. But he is most to be praised for what he is most blamed by ignorant and foolish men. In view of the good design of God in the evil design of his brethren, Joseph received consolation and happiness and imparted instruction and comfort to their minds. Let any person, who objects and contends against the designs of God, renounce the selfishness and blindness of his own heart and he will find the highest comfort and joy in the subjection of the evil designs of men, to the good designs of God.

3. Since it is so useful to know, that God subjects the evil designs of men to his good designs, all persons need the most faithful and thorough instruction on this subject.

His designs are the foundation of all the wonders of his power, wisdom and goodness in creation, providence and redemption. It is the great and constant object of God in his works and by his word to show and teach the glory of his designs. Their formation and accomplishment satisfy and gratify his own perfect and infinite benevolence, in the highest holiness and happiness of his kingdom. They are the only sufficient foundation for the confidence and praises of the righteous. And it is only by the light and glory of his purposes, in the sin and madness of his enemies, that God can silence and confound the wicked. God proclaims, before heaven, earth and hell, this glorious doctrine,—"My counsel shall stand : and I will do all my pleasure." The apostle says, "I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." Let the teachers and preachers of divine truth declare all the counsel of God with honesty and boldness ; and the righteous will rejoice, the wicked will tremble and God will be exalted in his holiness and glory. And then shall we hear, "as it were the voice of a great multitude and as the voice of many waters and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia : for *the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.*"

XVIII.

M O S E S .

And, behold, the babe wept.

EXODUS II. 6.

At the time this babe was born, his parents were in cruel bondage under the king of Egypt. This king had commanded that every son of Hebrew parents should be killed at his birth. But when Moses was born, his mother "saw him, that he was a goodly child;" and "she hid him three months." When she could no longer hide him, she put him in an ark of bullrushes and laid it by the river's brink. At this time the daughter of Pharaoh came to the river and saw the ark. And "she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child; and, behold, the babe wept." From these words it is proposed,

I. To consider the state of Moses in his infancy.

1. He was in a most feeble and helpless condition. He could not defend, nor deliver himself from any evil. He could not obtain the least good for himself. He had strength to do nothing but cry.

2. He was without knowledge. Respecting himself and the objects around him, the world into which he was born and the evils and dangers near him, he was in total ignorance. He knew nothing of the fear of his father, of the tears of his mother, or the watchful love of his sister. In the ark he could only feel, that his mother was not there. And he wept.

3. He was without moral goodness. It was not through pride, that his mother "saw he was a goodly child." For Stephen says, "He was exceeding fair." Yet, however fair he might be in his form and features, he had, as he was born into the world, nothing of the holy image of God.

4. He was born to trouble. By the common lot of man, he was under a sentence of death at his birth. By the command of Pharaoh he was required to be killed, as soon as he was born. What evils was he born to see in the bondage of Israel, the plagues and judgments upon Egypt, and the travels and afflictions of the wilderness !

5. Moses by nature was a child of wrath. Had he lived and died according to his native character and condition, he would have become hardened in wickedness and been fitted for destruction. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. There is none righteous, no, not one. By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified"! Paul says, "We are by nature children of wrath."

See then this feeble, ignorant, unholy, unhappy and wretched infant ! Can you wonder the babe wept ? Was he not a proper object of compassion to the daughter of the proud monarch of Egypt ?

II. It is proposed to inquire what this weeping babe became.

1. He became a man of great power. Stephen says, He "was mighty in words and deeds." He was the first of the inspired writers. What he wrote is the foundation of all the true knowledge of God and man, that ever has been in the world. Had he written only the book of Genesis, his instructions would have been of more value than the millions of uninspired volumes, of which there is yet no end. His words and deeds in Egypt, in the deliverance of Israel and the establishment of their peculiar institutions afford evidence of as great power, as ever was given to any one man on earth.

2. Moses became a man of great knowledge. Stephen says, "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." He was received into the royal family of Egypt and was instructed in every branch of knowledge then taught in that learned kingdom. But he was taught the knowledge of God ; and beheld his glory in his works of judgment and mercy. He saw God face to face.

3. Moses became eminent for holiness. He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season ; and he esteemed the re-

proach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. When God offered to make of Moses a great nation, in the spirit of holiness he refused the offer for the sake of God and his glory in his people. It is probable that this weeping babe became the holiest man that ever lived in this world.

4. He became eminent for usefulness. By him God caused his name to be known in Egypt, delivered Israel from bondage and preserved his kingdom and people from destruction. He performed such services for God and man, as have continued and increased in their effects unto this day ; and never will cease, nor lessen, while the earth remains, nor in the ages of eternity.

5. Moses received the highest degree of true honor. The objects and services for which God employed him ; the friendship which God showed him and the success which he gave him, are honors which come from God only.

III. It is to be shown how such a babe became such a man.

1. He became so by the purpose of God. God had a purpose and an object respecting Moses, as far above the thoughts and designs of creatures, as his greatness and goodness are above nothing and vanity.

2. Moses became what God designed him to be by his providence. The history of Moses, from his birth to his death, shows that there was an agency in respect to him above the conduct of his parents, of Pharaoh, of the Israelites and of angels, and which belongs only to Him, "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

3. Moses was not raised from a weeping babe to the greatest of prophets, without the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ. God regarded Jesus Christ in his designs and conduct towards Moses. His parents were not without faith in the Divine Redeemer. Moses had the true knowledge of Emmanuel. Neither salvation, nor holiness ever exist in any human being, only through the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. Moses did not become what he was without the agency of other persons. The faith of his mother, the love of his sister, the compassion of Pharaoh's daughter and the vast number of other persons, by whom he was

affected, had an influence in the formation of his character and in his wonderful achievements.

5. Moses did not arise from such a babe to such a man, without his own exertions. After Moses was able to walk, speak and act, it was by his most constant and diligent exertions, that he arose from the condition of a weeping infant in slavery to such a degree of power, knowledge, holiness, usefulness, happiness and honor, as made him more like the Lord Jesus Christ, while he was on earth, than any other man, who was ever born into the world.

From the account which has been given of Moses, we may derive the following observations.

1. We may perceive the immense value of real religion. It raises a man from nothing and from a state, that is in itself far worse than nothing, to a connection with God and his kingdom and the interests of the universe, that makes him not only a servant, a friend and a child of God, an heir of God and a joint-heir of Christ, but gives him a moral union with God. For his people the Saviour prays, "As thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. And the glory, thou hast given me, I have given them." Well, then, might he say to his disciples, "For he that is least among you all, the same shall be great."

2. The condition of a man without the religion of the Bible is exceedingly sorrowful. He is born to weep, to sin, to suffer, to die, to perish. What is the state of man without hope and without God in this world! What must be the state of a man, in the woes, torments and the despair of hell!

3. The happiness of the Lord Jesus Christ in the redemption of his people will be glorious. He will raise millions and millions of such creatures, as the weeping babe in the ark, from sin and shame, from death and hell, to be with him and like him in the kingdom of glory. When their redemption shall be complete, they will become as much above what Moses was in this life, as eternal ages exceed a few moments of time. Of himself in eternity, the Saviour says, "My delights were with the sons of men." What, then, will be his happiness, when his people shall dwell and reign with him in his glory!

4. The glory of God in the salvation of his people is wonderful. His object in the gospel, the purpose, the foundation, the progress and completion of redemption, with its everlasting connections and consequences, will show the greatness of his goodness and the goodness of his greatness, more and more forever and ever.

5. The state of this world will be truly happy, when all nations shall receive the religion of the Bible. Delusion and wickedness, contention, violence and blood shall then cease to prevail. This dreary and dangerous wilderness shall be as the garden of the Lord. Let the God of Moses be honored and served on earth, as he was by that man of God, and knowledge, holiness and happiness shall bless all nations.

6. From what Moses was and from what he became, we may perceive the interesting condition of human beings in this life. Was there too great a degree of attention and affection shown to Moses in his infancy? Behold the weeping infants of the human family! How soon they advance to childhood, to youth, to manhood, to middle life, to old age and death; and then pass into heaven or hell for eternity! What evils and dangers attend us in every period of this life? What mercies we need each moment? How great the effects that arise from the treatment we receive? How important and permanent the connections and consequences of our own conduct? Who ought not to pray unto God, as Moses prayed, "Let thy work appear unto thy servants; and thy glory unto their children."

7. The state of human infants demands the tenderest affections. When the proud daughter of the haughty tyrant of Egypt saw the little Hebrew slave, and "behold, the babe wept," she had compassion on him. The Lord Jesus Christ says, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones."

XIX.

P H A R A O H .

And Pharaoh sent and called for Moses and Aaron and said unto them, I have sinned this time ; the Lord is righteous ; and I and my people are wicked. **EXODUS ix. 27.**

THERE is not in the Scriptures a more affecting and fearful account of any person, than is given of Pharaoh. We are plainly taught and shown the conduct of God towards him and his conduct towards God. Between the Holy Sovereign of the universe and the proud monarch of Egypt, there was a most serious controversy. God has been, in this world, generally and almost universally condemned for his conduct towards Pharaoh. Yet Pharaoh was obliged by his conscience, however unwilling in his heart, to justify God and condemn himself. His judgment in favor of God and against himself is recorded in the words of our text. These words lead us,

I. To mention the conduct of God respecting Pharaoh.

1. God brought Pharaoh into existence. He is the former of human bodies and the father of human spirits. As a creature and as a man, Pharaoh was caused to exist by the purpose and will of God.

2. God gave Pharaoh such an existence as he chose to give him. In respect to the form of his body, his organs of sense, his mental endowments and his natural temperament and every other property and circumstance of his existence and formation, God caused him to be what he chose and designed he should be.

3. God appointed every event and circumstance of his existence in this state of trial. In his infancy, childhood and youth, in his manhood and every period and moment of his existence on earth, God appointed every event of his life in respect to its time, its nature, manner and every connection and consequence. In the divine purpose and

providence respecting Pharaoh, there was a constant and rapid succession of events that tried him every moment from his birth to his death.

4. Under the trials of this life God formed Pharaoh's character, by his own voluntary agency, for his future state. God often declared to Moses and by Moses to Pharaoh what he would do to him and what his conduct should be. God had a fixed purpose and an efficient influence respecting Pharaoh's character and conduct. Under this divine purpose and agency Pharaoh voluntarily, though not independently, accomplished the purpose of God in the formation of his own moral character. Pharaoh chose and designed and accomplished in respect to himself, by his free, moral agency in the formation of his character, what God had determined and declared he would cause him to do.

5. God closed the existence of Pharaoh on earth by his own supreme agency. God often declared to Pharaoh that he would destroy him from the earth. And he appointed and prepared such arrangements for the accomplishment of this terrible declaration, as should render his agency in the destruction of Pharaoh as conspicuous as possible. According to his purpose and his word God finished Pharaoh's earthly existence by such an act of his power, as has been remembered and celebrated from that day until this time, on earth and in heaven.

6. At the close of his earthly existence God consigned Pharaoh to endless perdition. Under divine instructions, mercies and judgments he hardened his heart against God and was most evidently and rapidly forming himself into a vessel of wrath. The act of God in his removal from this world was in judgment and not in mercy. At his death, there is every reason to believe, from the character and conduct of Pharaoh and from the character and conduct and word of God, that he was consigned to endless torment and despair.

The account, which is given in the Bible respecting the conduct of God towards Pharaoh, it is believed, will fully and forever warrant the preceding statement. In view of the conduct of God towards himself, "Pharaoh sent and called for Moses and Aaron and said unto them, I have sinned this time; the Lord is righteous; and I and my people are wicked."

It may now be inquired,

II. Why Pharaoh justified the conduct of God against himself? When Moses and Aaron first went to Pharaoh and said, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." But, when Pharaoh spake the words of our text, he could not say, "I know not the Lord." For God had shown himself by his word, his conduct, his purpose and his object respecting him. Nor could Pharaoh be erroneous, or ignorant respecting himself. His attention was awakened, his conscience enlightened and his heart tried; so that he knew and felt the truth respecting his own conduct. Why, then, did Pharaoh justify the conduct of God against himself? He was sensible of the truth in favor of God and against himself in the following respects.

1. He was sensible of the righteousness of God and of his own wickedness. He did not merely profess, but he knew from his own perceptions and sensations, that he was unrighteous in his feelings and actions towards God. And he was obliged to see, that the conduct of God was as plainly righteous, as his own conduct was unrighteous.

2. He was sensible of the divine benevolence and of his own malevolence. He was conscious of his own proud, selfish and malignant feelings and actions. And he saw abundant and decisive evidences and expressions of the divine benevolence, even in the objects, designs and acts of God towards himself.

3. He was sensible of the amiableness of the divine character and of his own hatefulness. He must have known that the moral perfection of God was the perfection of beauty; because it was as it ought to be. And he must have known, that his own conduct was what it ought not to be and was therefore entirely hateful.

4. He was sensible of the worthiness of God and of his own ill-desert. He must have known that God was worthy to be approved, praised and loved; and that he deserved to be hated, condemned and punished.

5. He must have been sensible of the wisdom of God and of his own foolishness. The designs and conduct of God, he must have seen, were suited to the greatest and

best ends by the best means. And he must have seen and felt, that his own designs and conduct turned all things against himself and must accomplish his own ruin.

6. He was sensible of the majesty of God and of his own meanness. The purposes, the instructions, the mercies and the judgments of God manifested the dignity of his nature and character ; and showed Pharaoh that his own character was abominable and his condition most miserable.

7. Pharaoh was convinced of the sovereignty of God and of his own dependence. He must have seen and felt that God had all creatures and all worlds, all actions and all events, under his supreme government and agency ; and that his own thoughts, feelings, designs and actions would only serve to exalt God and abase himself. Pharaoh had such a knowledge of God as showed him to himself and obliged him, by his own perceptions and convictions, to justify the divine conduct in his own destruction.

From the preceding statement may be offered the following observations.

1. There is no more reason to object against the purpose of God than against his conduct respecting the destruction of sinners. His conduct agrees with his purpose and proceeds from it. If the conduct of God ought to be approved, there can be no reason to condemn his purpose. God is as holy, wise and good in the formation of his purposes respecting sinners who perish, as he is in their accomplishment.

2. There is no good reason to oppose the Bible, because it teaches and shows the conduct of God respecting sinners that perish. Plain facts show that a part of mankind do persevere in wickedness and destroy themselves. And there is no light, nor comfort, nor relief respecting their character and condition, but from the object and purpose and conduct of God, as they are revealed in the Scriptures, on this most solemn and affecting subject.

3. Nothing can be gained by any attempt to oppose, deny, or conceal the conduct of God in the destruction of sinners. Such an attempt is to act against God in favor of sinners, when it does sinners no good ; and when they

are obliged to judge and decide in favor of God against themselves. Such attempts turn men from light to darkness and from God to Satan.

4. God has the best reasons to be willing and desirous that every rational creature should understand his conduct respecting sinners who perish. By this conduct he shows himself as he is and as he will be forever ; and most fully and clearly manifests his holiness and sovereignty. God is the same great and good and wise being in the perdition and in the salvation of sinners. By the perdition of sinners who perish, as well as by the salvation of sinners who are saved, God intends to manifest his perfections. He is as willing to be known in his justice, as in his grace and in his sovereignty, as in his holiness. He was willing Pharaoh should know what he designed and would perform in his destruction. God teaches and shows, by his word and conduct, that he "has mercy on whom he will ; and that whom he will he hardens." And the apostle honestly and boldly demands "What, if God, willing to show his wrath and make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction ; and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory !"

5. The true and faithful friends of God will maintain his truth respecting sinners who perish. They have the word, the conduct, the purpose and glory of God to illustrate and defend the truth on this subject. They have the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, Moses and the prophets, the evangelists and the apostles, to justify their sentiments and encourage their exertions. They have the true church of God and his faithful servants in all ages, the songs of angels and the joys of saints in heaven, to animate their feeble spirits. They have the consciences and the confessions of devils and sinners in hell against themselves and in favor of God and his conduct in their destruction. They have the judgment and the confession of Pharaoh and of every other convicted sinner on earth to sanction and embolden a true and faithful account of the object, purpose and conduct of God in the reprobation and punishment of sinners. They will soon be present, with the assembled

universe, before the throne of final decision and eternal retribution, to hear the sentence that shall be passed upon the righteous, by which they will be raised to heaven and upon the wicked, by which they will be sent to hell. Then the true and faithful servants of God shall "sing the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true thy ways, thou king of saints." But the supreme and final Judge now says, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he shall come in his own glory and his Father's and of the holy angels."

THE GOLDEN CALF.

And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let him break it off. So they gave it me: Then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf. Exodus xxxii. 24.

There is a true account of Aaron's conduct respecting the golden calf, in the chapter which contains the story. He received the gold at the hand of the people. And he fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made the molten calf. And they said, These be thy gods O Israel, which brought thee out of Egypt. And Aaron said, To-morrow is a feast unto the Lord. Yet when he was questioned by Moses, he made proclamation and said, To-morrow is a feast unto the Lord. Yet when he was questioned by Moses, he made proclamation and said, To-morrow is a feast unto the Lord. Yet when he was questioned by Moses, he made proclamation and said, To-morrow is a feast unto the Lord.

1. It may be shown that he is conscious of what he has done. 2. It implies that he is conscious of his conduct, when he says, To-morrow is a feast unto the Lord. 3. It implies that he is conscious of his conduct, when he says, To-morrow is a feast unto the Lord. 4. It implies that he is conscious of his conduct, when he says, To-morrow is a feast unto the Lord.

4. It implies that he is not willing to condemn himself for the sinful conduct, which he cannot justify. If a person were willing, directly and honestly, to acknowledge his sinfulness, he would never use, nor desire any excuse for his conduct.

II. It is to be shown, that mankind naturally attempt to excuse their sinful conduct.

1. This is evident from the nature of sin, which consists in selfishness. A selfish person attempts to exalt himself and is unwilling to see and confess his sin and guilt. They, who are selfish, refuse to abase themselves and submit to the dishonor and punishment, which they deserve. In the spirit of selfishness, Adam was not willing to condemn himself, but attempted to excuse himself by the conduct of Eve, and she attempted to excuse herself, by the deceitfulness of the Serpent. Such is the nature of sin and the influence of selfishness.

2. The doctrine is evident from the common conduct of sinners, who persist in impenitence. They are often reproved and rebuked for their transgressions; and are conscious of their sinfulness and ill desert. And they are called and bound, by the most solemn motives, to confess and forsake their sins. But against their consciences, their duty, their honor, safety and happiness, they attempt to excuse themselves rather than condemn their conduct and be pardoned, saved and blessed forever.

3. It is evident from the conduct of real, but imperfect saints. Who could have believed, that Aaron, after what he had seen and heard in Egypt, at the Red Sea and at Mount Sinai and after what he had said and done, could have made the golden calf? and then, after he had made it and was called to an account for his conduct, in view of the broken tables and the wrath of God, could have said what he did say to excuse his sinful conduct? David, for a time, kept silence and refused to confess his sin and guilt. Jonah said to God, "I do well to be angry, even unto death." So far as real Christians are inconstant and imperfect, they will attempt to excuse their unfaithful and unwise conduct. Surely, then, mankind have been poisoned by the old Serpent and have a heart, that is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. If it were not so, they would not attempt nor desire to excuse one sinful act, or word, or thought.

III. It is proposed to mention the effects of a person's attempt to excuse his sinful conduct.

While any persons attempt to excuse their sinful conduct,

1. They continue and increase their wickedness. They reject the light of truth, resist their own conscience and harden their hearts by their sinful and deceitful excuses. By such conduct their progress in sin is very rapid, and they hasten themselves in the way of delusion and destruction.

2. They, who attempt to excuse their sinful conduct, continue and increase the displeasure of God against themselves. God is able and ready to forgive and bless every sinner, who confesses and forsakes his sins. But they, who sin and attempt to excuse their conduct, reject his mercy and provoke his anger. In this way they treasure unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath.

The doctrine before us suggests the following remarks.

1. Mankind are, by nature, exceedingly sinful. The account of their total, malignant and desperate wickedness, as it is given in the Bible, is proved and shown to be true by their conduct in all ages and nations. It is evident from the impenitence of every sinner and imperfection of every saint.

2. They are naturally disposed to resist the instructions of divine truth. Every form and turn and change of error and sin, that ever have existed on earth, are so many perverse and obstinate instances of resistance to divine instruction. Truth exposes and condemns sin, which sinners attempt to conceal and excuse. If it were not so, the light of truth, which shines in the works and word of God above the brightness of the sun, would be seen and loved through the earth.

3. They who have sinned, will be pleased when they can find any apparent excuse for their conduct. If they could find any thing against God, or Jesus Christ, or the law, or the gospel, or the Bible, they would rejoice, as in a strong hold to defend themselves in their wickedness. If they find any thing in Christian ministers, or religious professors, in parents, or brothers, or sisters, or in themselves, that seems to be any kind, or degree of an excuse for their sinful conduct, they are ready to open their

mouths in favor of themselves and refuse to plead guilty before man and God.

4. Sinners under genuine conviction will see, that their conduct is forever inexcusable. Their mouths will be shut.

5. When sinners are truly penitent, they will condemn themselves. Real penitents, in the kingdom of glory, will not boast in themselves over the most sinful and guilty and wretched sinners in hell. Aaron and David and Solomon and Peter and Paul and the whole redeemed family will say, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake." Amen.

III.

SANCTIFICATION.

Sanctify yourselves, therefore ; and be ye holy : for I am the Lord your God. And ye shall keep my statutes and do them : I am the Lord, who sanctify you. LEVITICUS XX. 7, 8.

IN these words God teaches his people their obligation to be holy, in its connection with their dependence upon him for holiness. The connection of their obligation with their dependence, in respect to sanctification, agrees with the whole system of divine truth, as it is contained in the scriptures and illustrated by the conduct of God towards his people and by their conduct towards him. From the words of our text, then, we may safely derive the following sentiment, — The people of God are bound to sanctify themselves, by their dependence upon him for sanctification.

I. On this subject it is to be shown what the sanctification of his people implies.

1. It implies the entire separation of themselves from every external transgression. Real holiness opposes whatever is sinful. So far as any person is holy, he cannot commit any sinful action ; but he will withdraw and separate himself from every external expression of wickedness.

2. It implies the subjection of their mental powers to the divine requirements. Though the powers of the human mind are not, in themselves, either holy, or unholy, as they are not of a moral nature, yet they must be employed for holy, or sinful purposes. Rational creatures are required to be holy to the extent of their natural ability. They, who are holy, subject their mental powers to the divine requirements, in the exercise and under the influence of holy affections.

3. Holy affections are implied in sanctification. The holiness, which God requires of his people, is of the same nature, as the holiness, which forms the perfection and glory of his own moral character. Therefore, he so often says, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." Holiness is the essence and sum of moral goodness and includes the existence and exercise of every proper and virtuous affection.

4. Sanctification implies the proper expression of holy affections in external actions. The Savior says, "From the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things."

II. It is proposed to show that the people of God are dependent upon him for sanctification.

1. Their dependence upon him for sanctification is evident from the nature of their existence. They are creatures, who have been caused to exist according to the purpose and act of their Creator. And he must have had such a purpose and object in their existence, as he is both able and willing to accomplish. Constant and entire dependence upon their Creator is inseparable from the nature of a created being. In respect to rational creatures their moral character and conduct are the only objects of peculiar importance. They, who become the people of God, are certainly as dependent upon him for holiness as any other subjects of his moral government. From the nature of their existence, there is as much reason to believe, they are as dependent upon God for their moral affections as for their mental powers.

2. Their dependence upon God for holiness is evident from the divine purpose respecting their sanctification. God could not have been indifferent in respect to the moral character and conduct of his people. Their salvation from endless punishment and their eternal happiness and the glory of God and the honor and happiness of the Lord Jesus Christ, in their redemption, are suspended on their repentance and sanctification. Is it, then, possible, that God should have had no purpose in respect to the holiness of their character? To the saints at Ephesus the Apostle writes, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according

as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."

3. That the people of God are dependant upon him for sanctification is plainly taught in the scriptures. By the prophet God says to his people, "a new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh. And ye shall be my people and I will be your God." To the saints at Philippi, the Apostle writes, "He, that hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

4. That the people of God are dependent upon him for sanctification is evident from their experience. They are as sensible of their total native sinfulness, as they are of their existence. They know too that the most powerful motives and means, the convictions of their own consciences and the most earnest desires to obtain salvation were not effectual to their repentance and conversion. They are sensible of such moral effects in themselves, at their regeneration and in their progressive sanctification, as can be truly ascribed to no other cause, but "the exceeding greatness of the mighty power of God." And they have, in their own experience, in proportion to their advancement in knowledge and holiness, increasing evidence of their dependence upon God for every holy affection and action. They can most heartily adopt the words of the Apostle, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God."

III. It is to be shown, that the people of God are bound by their dependence on him for sanctification, to sanctify themselves.

1. The dependence of human beings upon God for holiness is the only foundation for their sanctification. Holiness in men must be of God, or of themselves. Is it of themselves? "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can. So then they, that be in the flesh, cannot please God." The Lord Jesus Christ said to his hearers, "ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." They, who become the sons of God are "born, not of blood, nor of the will of

the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." If holiness in human beings be not possible with God, it is impossible with man. If God cannot consistently with his moral government and their free moral agency, sanctify his people, their sanctification is impossible. But it is possible with God. On no other foundation than human dependence upon God for holiness can he say to any human beings,—"Ye shall be my people and I will be your God." On no other foundation can he say to his people, "Sanctify yourselves, I am the Lord, who sanctify you." On no other foundation can the Lord Jesus Christ say, "all, that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me." On no other foundation could God have formed the purpose of redemption, or can there be the least reason to hope for the salvation of a single person. But though sanctification is not possible with man, since it is possible with God, it is the duty of sinners to renounce every degree of dependence on themselves and turn to God and receive the offered influence of the Holy Spirit. To sinners God says, "turn ye at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you! I will make known my words unto you." As their dependence on God for holiness is the only possible foundation of sanctification to his people, in proportion to their dependence upon him is their obligation to him to be holy. Did any person ever feel his obligation to God to be holy, while he was ignorant and insensible of his dependence upon him for sanctification? Did any person ever become holy, without a clear sight and deep sense of his dependence on God for holiness? Are not the people of God sensible of their obligation to sanctify themselves? and equally sensible of their dependence on him for sanctification? Are sinners under the gospel placed upon their fancied independence in respect to their moral character, or upon their natural ability, or their moral discernment, or their desperate efforts, or motives, or means for sanctification? They are called and bound to rely for holiness, as well as happiness, on the Almighty power of God and the exceeding riches of his grace. And they are bound by the vengeance as well as the mercy of God, by the government as well as the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the wisdom as well as the grace of the Holy Spirit, to

repent and believe the gospel and become holy. It is in view of their obligation to be holy, according to the gospel, in connection with their dependence on God for holiness, that his people turn from themselves unto him and perfect holiness in his fear. In exact proportion to their sight and sense of their dependence on God for sanctification, is their sight and sense of their obligation to sanctify themselves. This statement is not founded on any philosophical theory, or metaphysical speculation. It is founded on the true nature and real relations of God and man. It agrees with the whole system of natural and revealed religion. And it is illustrated and confirmed by the uniform, rational and scriptural experience of the true Church and children of God in all ages and nations.

2. Human dependence upon God for sanctification is the foundation on which he requires his people to sanctify themselves. In view of his sovereignty and his pleasure and purpose respecting his people God says, "Circumcise therefore, the foreskin of your heart and be no more stiff-necked." He also says, "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart and the heart of thy seed to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Again, "Make you a new heart and a new spirit;" and "a new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you." God requires his people to be holy and he declares that they shall be holy; to repent and declares they shall repent; to believe and declares that faith is his gift; to live and says they shall live. The connection between his sovereignty and their dependence is the foundation on which he establishes his requirements respecting their sanctification. Their sanctification consists in the voluntary exercise of holy affections, in view of proper objects and motives, under his supreme agency. There is in their dependence upon him for holiness a foundation for his requirements and their obligations. And while he says, "I am the Lord, who sanctify you," he can also say, on a rational and permanent foundation, "Sanctify yourselves, therefore and be ye holy; for I am the Lord your God."

3. Their dependence upon God for holiness is the only foundation of their confidence respecting their sanctifi-

cation. Who can trust in himself for holiness? "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it?" Who can trust in means and motives for renovation and sanctification? God says, "Judge I pray you, between me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" Of the Savior it is written, "Though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him." And again, "Neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." Why do the people of God pray to him for their sanctification and for the sanctification of their fellow-men, if they are not dependent upon him for holiness? Divine sovereignty and human dependence in their sanctification is the only rational and scriptural and possible foundation for any confidence in the people of God, that they shall become holy and continue to be so should they be perfectly holy.

4. Their dependence upon God for holiness is the only foundation of their successful exertions to sanctify themselves. If they were not dependent upon him for holiness, they neither would, nor could become holy by his influence. And if they could not become holy by his influence, they could not be holy by any other agency. For holiness can no more exist in his people, without his agency, than all created beings and all events can exist without the agency of God. There is no possible, nor conceivable foundation for the people of God to make any exertions for their sanctification, if they are not dependent upon him for holiness. But their dependence upon God is an immutable and sufficient foundation for his almighty agency and their voluntary and successful exertions in their sanctification. The apostle says, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me." If the people of God believe him when he says, "Ye shall keep my statutes and do them; I am the Lord who sanctify you;" they may be encouraged and induced to show their faith by their works, when he says, "Sanctify yourselves, therefore, and be ye holy; for I am the Lord your God."

The doctrine which has been the subject of our

attention at this time, furnishes the following observations.

1. We may see why the doctrines of grace are the only means of good works. These doctrines teach and show the holiness and sovereignty of God and the sinfulness and dependence of man. In respect to God and men the gospel of divine grace declares and enforces the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. And it is through the truth, by the power and grace of the Holy Spirit, that God enlightens, awakens, convicts, humbles, comforts, strengthens and sanctifies his people. The Savior prays for his people, saying, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." The doctrines of truth and grace are the means of good works, because they teach man to turn from himself and his weakness and folly unto God and his strength and wisdom. The Lord Jesus Christ said to the apostle, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." And the apostle says, "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong." Divine sovereignty and human dependence, in their proper attitude and connection, are fundamental, essential and cardinal doctrines in the system of truth and duty; and are suited to produce the greatest and best effects in the knowledge, holiness, usefulness and happiness of Christian believers.

2. So far as Christians truly perceive and feel their dependence on God for holiness, they will maintain holy affections. The Psalmist says unto God, "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." The church says unto Christ, "Draw me, we will run after thee." It is written, "When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel." The apostle says to Christians, "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." Again he says, "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." It is written, "They that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength. They shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." It is in fact true, that when the people of God are most sensible of their depen-

dence on him for holiness, they are the most active, faithful and joyful in his service.

3. Self-sufficiency in any persons prevents practical piety. It is written, "Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall." It is also written, "God resisteth the proud." The whole design and system of the gospel opposes a proud and selfish spirit. And such a spirit hates and rejects the whole gospel. "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him."

4. Such sentiments, as encourage human exertions, independently of divine influence, are destructive to holiness. To the false prophets in Israel God said, "With lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life." Again, "Behold his soul, which is lifted up, is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith." So long as a man depends on himself he will not depend on God, nor turn to him. The Lord Jesus Christ said to his disciples, "Without me ye can do nothing." Confidence in human exertions, without divine power and grace, is the commencement of declension in individuals and communities from the doctrines, duties and blessings of the gospel. To the Galatians Paul says, "Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?"

5. Sinners never will repent, until they renounce every degree of confidence in themselves. Mankind are by nature proud, selfish, self-righteous and self-sufficient. They attempt to obtain justification by their own sinful performances and sanctification by their unholy affections. In this way they persist in their wickedness, refuse to repent and reject the salvation of the gospel. To every sinner God says, "Thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help." Sinners must despair of all help and hope from themselves and other creatures, before they will turn to God and hope in him. Ephraim says unto God, "Turn thou me and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented." It is only with right views of God and themselves, that sinners will ever condemn and abhor

themselves and justify God in their condemnation. Such opinions, measures and means, as strengthen the confidence of sinners in themselves, prevent their repentance and are fatally deceitful and destructive.

6. The doctrine of human obligation, without its proper connection with the doctrine of human dependence, will produce the most pernicious effects. It prevents the true knowledge and proper influence of our obligation to God, on account of his sovereignty and our dependence. It also prevents the knowledge of the only real foundation and encouragement for holy exertion. It emboldens the presumption of self-deceivers and weakens the confidence of the humble and fearful. The exhibition of human obligation without human dependence turns men from God, the source of light and the fountain of life, to darkness and death. The key-note of the whole gospel the Savior has given in these words, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The apostle asks, "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" And he says, "The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." The sum of our duty is to turn from ourselves to God and to "trust in the Lord forever; for in the Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength."

7. We may see why Christians always decline in religion without doctrinal instruction. Without such instruction the objects, the sources and motives of holy affections and actions, are not seen. The fountains of living waters are closed and there are no streams to water the city and the garden of God. What refreshment can the people of God obtain from cisterns, that can hold no water? For Christians the apostle prays, that "their love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all judgment." And Peter says to Christians, "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow by it." He also says, "Beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." That Christians may "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful unto every good work," they must increase "in the knowledge of God." Ignorance is not the mother of devotion; nor is error the means of life, growth and strength.

8. The highest system of doctrine, is necessary to the true standard of duty. Doctrinal knowledge bounds and limits holy affections and actions in creatures, who are perfectly holy. In the church and children of God on earth, the performance of duty will never rise higher than their knowledge and reception of divine truth. In exact proportion to their knowledge of God and themselves, in his holiness and sovereignty and their sinfulness and dependence, as they are taught in the gospel, his people will see and feel their obligation and encouragement to be holy as he is holy and perfect, even as their Father, who is in heaven is perfect. The apostle raised the standard of duty, as high as he carried the system of doctrine. He established the foundation, the motives and means of holiness upon the doctrines of election according to the eternal purpose of God, of justification through the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ and sanctification through the almighty and invincible influence of the Holy Spirit. These doctrines and all the other doctrines and duties and blessings of the gospel are founded on the revealed manner of the Divine existence, that there are three persons in the divine nature and essence, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who are one God, the same in substance and equal in power and glory. According to this fundamental doctrine of the gospel and the commission which the Lord Jesus Christ gave to his disciples, they, who are baptized, are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. In proportion, as the doctrines, which have now been stated, have been taught and received, the people of God have been separated from the errors, delusions, vanities and iniquities of this foolish world and have been holy in their affections, exertions and enjoyments.

9. Since the people of God are bound, by their dependence upon him for sanctification, to sanctify themselves, we may see why they, who depend least on the means of grace are the most faithful to use these means. They do not rest on these means, nor on themselves in the use of these means ; but they rest wholly and only on God. They use the means of knowledge and holiness, according to their proper design and most powerful influence ; as the means of access to God through Jesus Christ by the

Holy Spirit. God in the gospel of his grace, in his holy and gracious sovereignty, is the end, the object, the refuge, the help, the hope, the strength and life of his people, in their ignorance, sinfulness, ill-desert, misery, dependence, weakness and death. And they find, that God in his truth and by his grace, according to their dependence on him and their obligation to him, "gives power to the faint and to him, that hath no might, increases strength." The less the people of God depend on means, the more do they use the means of light, faith, love, peace, hope, strength and joy from Him, on whom they are constantly and entirely dependent for every holy and gracious affection and action.

10. We may perceive the wisdom of God in the instructions of the Bible. They teach the truth of God and the duty of man on their everlasting foundation and in their immutable connection. The whole purpose and work of God, in creation, providence and redemption, are designed and suited to show the divine sovereignty and human dependence in the existence, character and condition of his people by nature; and in their justification, sanctification and redemption according to the exceeding greatness of his mighty power and the exceeding riches of his grace, that he might manifest the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, prepared unto glory. Such being the purpose and work of God in the redemption of his people, who will not say as Paul says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth?" He, that is ashamed of the true gospel of divine wisdom, power, glory and grace, is ashamed of God and afraid of man. But we ought to be ashamed of man and afraid of God. "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." In the wisdom of God against the folly of man, the Bible brings and applies the whole counsel of God and the whole duty of man to exhibit and enforce the obligation of his people to sanctify themselves, in connection with their dependence upon him for sanctification. Therefore the apostle says, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

XIII.

FAITHFULNESS OF MOSES.

My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house.

NUMBERS XII. 7.

THESE words were spoken by God in favor of Moses, against Miriam and Aaron, who had spoken against him. In his meekness Moses made no reply to what had been said by his brother and sister. But God suddenly interposed for his vindication and for their chastisement. He declared that Moses was not as common prophets, but had a special office and was as eminent for his faithfulness, as for his office. The words of our text lead us to consider the faithfulness of Moses.

I. We may notice what Moses renounced for the service of God.

1. He renounced worldly sentiments against the most powerful temptations. In the royal family of Egypt, as the son of Pharaoh's daughter and heir to the treasures of that kingdom, he was exposed to the most powerful inducements to choose and pursue the objects of this world for his portion. But he was not influenced by worldly sentiments in his choice and conduct, but by his duty to God.

2. He renounced worldly connections with the most flattering enjoyments. If he would have continued his connections with the royal family of Egypt, he might have received an high degree of worldly enjoyments and been flattered and honored by the highest distinctions this world can afford. But for the service of God he renounced his worldly connections with their flattering prospects.

3. He renounced every worldly interest. With the treasures of Egypt and as it has been supposed, with an apparent heirship to that kingdom, he renounced these

interests for the service of God. Having noticed what Moses renounced for the service of God,

II. We may mention the conduct of Moses in his service.

1. He publicly joined himself to the people of God in their greatest debasement. When the Hebrews were holden in cruel bondage and subjected to the greatest abuses, he turned from the temptations, enjoyments and interests of Egypt and joined himself to his enslaved brethren.

2. In the service of God he patiently submitted to a constant series of afflictions. The sorrows of his own people in bondage and the judgments, that fell upon Egypt were afflictive and painful to his spirit. But the provocations of Israel in the wilderness and the general destruction of that rebellious generation induced him to say unto God, "we are consumed by thine anger and by thy wrath we are troubled."

3. Moses subjected himself to the severest reproaches. He must have suffered the contempt and scorn of Egypt, for his refusal to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He was blamed and reproached by the children of Israel in their trials, for forty years before his death. Nor has his name and conduct to this day wholly escaped the censures and reproaches of Infidels and scoffers.

4. He persevered in the service of God with peculiar self-denial. For the service of God he made no account of what this world might promise, or threaten, or of what he might suffer, or enjoy. The glory of God and good of his people induced Moses to turn from his own interests to God and to serve him with the highest degree of self-denial and fidelity.

III. It may be shown why Moses was so faithful in the service of God.

1. He loved God with supreme affection for his supreme glory. His desire and prayer was that he might see the glory of God. By spiritual manifestations, by miraculous communications, by the dispensations of providence and by continual instructions, Moses had the knowledge of God in as great a degree, as was ever given to any mere man on earth. In proportion to his knowledge of God, he loved him for his greatness and goodness and was able and willing to serve him.

2. He cordially approved of the divine purposes. God revealed to Moses the great designs of his wisdom and goodness. By his designs and by his conduct in judgments and mercies God gave him a knowledge of his great objects in the wonders of creation and providence. These objects agreed with the infinite perfections of the divine character and manifested the glory of God. The objects and designs of God, Moses would approve with all his heart and desire to promote with all his power.

3. Moses practically confided in the divine promises. True faith in God and his word was the moving principle in the conduct of Moses. Against every forbidding prospect and every painful event he trusted in God and believed what he had promised respecting his own conduct and designs and the preservation and redemption of his people.

4. Moses sincerely loved the people of God. Notwithstanding the rebellions of the wicked and the imperfections of the righteous among his professed people, Moses was most ardently attached to their real interests. He loved the people of God not merely, nor chiefly on their own account, but for the sake of the divine purpose and glory in his people.

5. He disinterestedly respected the eternal rewards, which God will render his faithful servants. The Apostle declares, that Moses "had respect unto the recompense of the reward." He had a true faith in the future and endless holiness and happiness and glory of the saints in heaven. Their glory he could not enjoy, nor see with the spirit of selfishness. But the spirit of universal, disinterested and impartial benevolence would prepare him to desire and enjoy the inheritance of the saints in light. And in proportion to his faithfulness in the service of God on earth, would be his future and eternal reward and glory in heaven. From this subject we may derive the following remarks.

1. The religion of the Bible forms the worthiest characters. It presents the highest objects of attention and exertion. It employs the strongest motives. It secures and sanctions the most exalted services. It produces the wisest and best effects. What are the poets, the orators, the historians, the philosophers of this world, with

all their talents and honors, when compared with Moses, the man of God and his faithful servant? What are the warriors, the statesmen, the merchants, the monarchs of the earth, with all their power and glory, compared with Moses, who was raised from cruel bondage to man to the highest freedom and communion with God? What dignity does the Atheist, the Infidel, or the Errorist of any name, or notion, offer to man for the sentiments, interests, affections, exertions and enjoyments, which the religion of the Bible imparted to Moses?

2. The faithful servants of God may safely confide their character to his decision. Should they be reproached by scoffers, blamed by worldlings, condemned by oppressors, derided by unholy professors of religion, envied by less faithful Christians, be distrusted and opposed by their nearest relatives, be forsaken and forgotten by their kindest helpers; yet they may say, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" If Satan accuse the faithful servant of God and the world triumph, if his faith begin to fail and unbelief relax his armor and weaken his strength, if God seem to hide himself, or to frown against him, while earth and hell are moved and armed for the battle and begin to shout the victory; yet in weakness and debasement, under afflictions and reproaches, in the meekness of wisdom, he may be fearless and silent; for the God of Moses is with him. He need have no alarm, but for his stubborn foes and his timid friends. He has a Comforter in his own spirit. He has an advocate in heaven. His Father is the Sovereign of the universe. "This honor have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord."

XIII.

REMEMBRANCE OF SINFULNESS.

Remember and forget not, how thou provokedest the Lord thy God to wrath in the wilderness ; from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came to this place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord.

DEUTERONOMY, IX. 7.

It was the design of God, by his conduct towards his ancient people, to manifest his real character ; and, also, to manifest their real character by their conduct towards him. This design he pursued and accomplished, by the wonders of his mercy and of his wrath towards that people in Egypt and in the wilderness. According to the divine purpose, Moses placed before Israel the scenes through which they had passed, that they might make a wise and useful improvement of their trials. For this object he knew it was of the highest importance, that they should review and remember their provocations and rebellions against God. And he desired and labored, by all the means in his power, to produce and maintain in their minds a proper remembrance of their sinfulness. As a remembrance of their sinfulness was highly important for that people, it must be equally important for all other persons. It is therefore now proposed,

I. To show what is necessary that persons may have a proper remembrance of their sinfulness.

1. For this purpose it is necessary, that they should consider the character of God, against whom they have sinned. It was only in view of his character and conduct, as he had shown himself to his ancient people, that they could have a true sight and sense of their sinfulness. And it is only in view of his infinite and eternal perfections, that any person ever has a true knowledge of his own sinful, guilty and hateful conduct.

2. It is necessary, that they consider the perfection of the law which they transgress. This law agrees with the divine character and with the relations and obligations of men to their Creator and their fellow-creatures. It is founded on the eternal and immutable principles of righteousness. And it is perfectly holy, just and good. It requires pure, constant, perfect holiness ; and it forbids every evil thought, word and deed on the pains of endless death. "By the law is the knowledge of sin."

3. To a proper remembrance of sinfulness, it is necessary to consider in what sin consists. Sin is forever the same thing in its nature and essence. It is "the transgression of the law," which requires perfect holiness, justice and goodness. This law is transgressed by every proud, selfish and unholy affection and action. Sin by the law becomes and appears "exceedingly sinful."

4. The evil effects of sin are to be considered, in order to a proper remembrance of sinfulness. Every sinner injures and destroys himself. As far as his sinful conduct extends he injures his fellow-creatures. And every sinner provokes God and rebels against him. If the conduct of sinners were not restrained and counteracted, it would destroy the government, happiness and glory of God and all the peace, order, beauty and happiness of his holy kingdom.

5. In order to a proper remembrance of his sinfulness, a person must consider by what pretences he is induced to sin. It is wholly through pride, deceit, folly and selfishness, that any person ever sins. Though sinners attempt to gain something for themselves by sin, yet they deprive themselves of all good and subject themselves to all evil by their conduct. There can be no good reason for any sinful action. Nor can the least good be gained by any sinner by his evil conduct. Sinners act from the foolishness and madness of their own hearts.

6. To a proper remembrance of his sinfulness, a person must consider the motives against which he sins. These motives are found in the holiness and majesty of God, the infinite value of his approbation, the holiness and happiness of our fellow-creatures and our own peace, honor, safety and happiness. The motives against sin are urged by the mediation and atonement of the Lord

Jesus Christ and the offer of forgiveness and salvation with eternal blessedness and glory and by the endless torment and despair of hell. There is every possible motive against sin ; and not the smallest reason for one sinful action. God says, "Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate !"

II. It is proposed to show that it is highly important for all persons to maintain a proper remembrance of their own sinfulness. Such a remembrance is highly important for the following reasons.

1. That they may not suppose they ever receive any blessings from God on account of their own goodness. As mankind are by nature filled with proud and selfish feelings, they exalt themselves and are morally blinded to the true goodness and glory of God and the motives of his conduct. They imagine there must be some reason in themselves for the favors which they receive from God. But it is only for his own sake and from his own goodness and mercy, even against their unworthiness and ill-desert, that any persons ever receive from God the least favor. And if they would be sensible of the true source and reason of the blessings they receive, they must maintain a proper and constant remembrance of their sinfulness.

2. That they may be truly humble before God for the mercies they may receive from him. No creature can have the least reason to be proud of his existence, or endowments, or services, or enjoyments. Pride is enmity and rebellion against God. What, then, is man, that God should be mindful of him ? As soon as any person forgets his own sinfulness he forgets the mercy of God and exalts himself against his Creator and Sovereign. But every mercy we receive is given in such a manner and for such reasons, as should humble us and make us ashamed of ourselves forever. The more mercies God bestows upon us, if we remember our sinfulness, the more we shall exalt him and abase ourselves.

3. All persons should remember their sinfulness, that they may be thankful to God for his mercies. Our obligations to be grateful for divine favors are in proportion to our sinfulness. If we would be truly thankful for the benefits we receive from God, we must forever remember our provocations and our rebellions against him.

4. We must remember our sinfulness, in order to trust in the mercy of God for the blessings we need. We shall forever be needy, guilty and dependent creatures. And we shall need greater and greater blessings from God as long as we live and as long as we exist. But no blessing, between the deepest torments of hell and the highest joys of heaven, can ever come to us, except from the infinite and sovereign mercy of God. If we would have true faith in God for a drop of water, a crumb of bread, or a breath of air, we must remember our sinfulness.

5. That we may be obedient to divine requirements, it is necessary to remember our sinfulness. The divine requirements agree with our sinful and guilty character and our wretched and ruined condition. That we may obey a single requirement, we must know and feel, that we are not worthy to lift our eyes to heaven; but deserve to be cast into hell; and therefore ought to have the spirit of the publican, who smote on his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me, the sinner." It is only with such a spirit, that we shall ever perform any duty, so as to be approved and accepted of God.

6. We should remember our own sinfulness, that we may truly enjoy the blessings which God is pleased to give. In proportion to our sinfulness God manifests his perfections in the blessings we receive from him. The more God is seen and known by his people, the greater will be their happiness in the reception of his mercies. Humility and self-abasement in sinners are essential to their exaltation and happiness in the kingdom of glory and their proper enjoyment of divine favor on earth.

From this subject we may derive the following remarks.

1. We may perceive what judgment we ought to form respecting any system of religious sentiments. The religion of the Bible teaches and shows the real character and condition of mankind. And every doctrine and duty and blessing of the gospel agrees with the true doctrine of human sinfulness. Let every religious sentiment and system be tried by this doctrine.

2. We may see how to form a correct judgment respecting the instructions of religious teachers. Are

their instructions designed and suited to exhibit and enforce the true knowledge and remembrance of human sinfulness? Do they experimentally and practically show us to ourselves? Do they lead us to a deeper knowledge and a more humbling remembrance of our inexpressible and inconceivable sinfulness? O, for a preacher like Paul, who said, "O wretched man, that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

3. We may form a correct judgment of human characters. Are they like the pharisee, or like the publican? A third class of human characters cannot exist.

4. We have a thorough standard of religious experience. Does the heart of the supposed convert, or the Christian professor truly and deeply echo the doctrine of human sinfulness?

5. We may see how saints advance in religion. God says to his people, "I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord; that thou mayest remember and be confounded and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done."

6. We may see the first and great duty of sinners. "Repent and turn from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin." "God now commandeth all men every where to repent."

III V.

D I V I N E T R U T H .

My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew ; as the small rain upon the tender herb and as the showers upon the grass. DEUTERONOMY, XXXII. 2.

MOSES, in the near prospect of his own death, showed his affection and friendship to the people for whom he had labored and suffered many years, by the most constant and faithful exertions for their instruction. From his thorough knowledge of their character and conduct he was persuaded, that the instructions of divine truth were the best means he could use for their benefit. And he was sensible, that important purposes would be accomplished by his exertions, even if they should disobey and disregard the lessons of his wisdom and kindness. But whatever might be their conduct, he was assured that divine truth deserved universal attention. Therefore he said, " Give ear, O ye heavens ! and I will speak ; and hear, O earth ! the words of my mouth." And then he declared, in the words of our text, the happy influence of divine truth : " My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew ; as the small rain upon the tender herb and as the showers upon the grass."

From these words may be derived the following doctrine, The instructions of divine truth are suited to produce the most happy effects.

In our attention to this doctrine it is proposed,

I. To mention the subjects on which divine truth gives us instruction. Divine truth gives us instruction respecting God and man. The truth, in respect to God and man, includes all the doctrines and duties of religion. It includes what we ought to believe and to do in respect to our Creator, our fellow-creatures and ourselves.

1. Divine truth teaches the true knowledge of God.

It teaches his existence, the properties of his nature, the revealed manner of his existence, the natural attributes of his character, his moral perfections, his objects, his purposes, his agency, his offices, the effects of his conduct, his law, his gospel and his happiness. The instructions of divine truth teach and show, as fully and clearly as possible, the true knowledge of God in its breadth and length and depth and height.

2. Divine truth teaches the true knowledge of man. It teaches the nature of his existence, his mental faculties, his capacity, his condition, his moral affections, his agency, his relations and obligations, his sinfulness, his misery, his ill-desert, his duty, his safety, his honor and happiness, the object of his present existence, his future condition and the effects, connections and consequences of his conduct in this state of trial. Divine truth teaches and shows the great doctrines in respect to human beings, their duties and their interests.

II. It is proposed to show, that the instructions of divine truth are suited to produce the most happy effects.

1. They are suited to relieve our minds from uncertainty on religious subjects. None, but a being of infinite knowledge, goodness and wisdom, could be able and willing to give us, in our ignorance, sinfulness and misery, the instructions which we need for the relief of our spirits from the errors and evils of this dark and sinful world. But the Bible gives us such instructions so evidently and perfectly, as affords relief to every person who will honestly and humbly receive what it teaches.

2. The instructions of divine truth are suited to direct and raise our attention to the most important objects. They place God before us, in his greatness and goodness, his holiness and happiness, as he exists forever and ever. They place before us his objects and his works in creation, providence and redemption. And they place before us the only account of this world and human beings, that can teach and show us any great and good object, that is to be obtained by their existence. But the instructions of divine truth teach us, that the greatest and best ends will be accomplished by the existence of every creature and every event, however small and evil they may be in themselves.

3. Divine truth teaches the foundation and method of salvation for sinners. It reveals the great purpose of forgiveness and redemption through the mediation and atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it shows that the method of salvation displays and exalts the perfections of the divine character and raises every penitent believer to a height of holiness and happiness, that could, in no other manner, be bestowed upon creatures.

4. Divine truth is perfectly suited to regulate and sanctify our affections and promote our deliverance from the power and defilement of iniquity. It teaches our duty with the greatest kindness and faithfulness; and offers and promises the powerful and gracious influence, that we need to lead and strengthen us in the way to heaven and prepare us for its holy services and enjoyments.

5. Divine truth is suited to comfort us under all the evils that ever exist. It shows that no evil ever exists for its own sake, nor merely because it could not have been prevented; but that God has designed and caused evil to exist in subjection to his power, goodness and wisdom and for the accomplishment of the greatest and best ends that are possible, or conceivable, or desirable, even with Jehovah himself.

6. The instructions of divine truth are suited to lead us to the true sources of happiness. They show us what this world is and what man is and what creatures must be forever. And they teach and show us what God is and has ever been and will be forever and ever. They teach us to choose God for our confidence and refuge and hope on earth and for our eternal portion and happiness in heaven.

7. Divine truth is suited to prepare us for the kingdom of glory. It shows us the design of our present existence; the decisions of the final judgment and the retributions of eternity. And it shows us that we may, for the glory of God and for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, be prepared, by the conflicts and trials of this short life, for the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory in heaven.

The present subject offers the following observations,

1. The prevalence of divine truth among all nations is,

in respect to mankind on earth, an object of the highest importance. Such an event is predicted in the Scriptures. It is written, "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." The Savior could have given no greater and better command than he gave when he said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." The nature and effects of divine truth require and bind all persons, to whom it is sent, to labor for its prevalence in its purity and power among all nations.

2. Any corruption, perversion, or concealment of divine truth is highly criminal. It opposes human ignorance to divine knowledge, human wickedness to divine goodness and the folly of man to the wisdom of God. "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord."

3. The fundamental principles of divine truth are perfectly simple. Divine truth is founded on what really exists in respect to God and man. The truth in respect to God and man is the great subject on which we need instruction in this state of darkness, wickedness and misery. And the instructions of the Bible teach us what is found to be true in fact. The Bible teaches the sovereignty of God and the dependence of man; the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man; the designs of God and the duty of man.

4. No limits can be set to real religion, as it is in its connections and consequences. It includes the whole extent of truth in respect to God and man. It embraces objects and interests that affect the universe and extend from eternity to eternity. The Psalmist says unto God, "Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name."

5. The instructions of divine truth demand and deserve the most earnest and faithful attention of all persons. Isaiah says, "Hear, O heavens! and give ear, O earth! for the Lord hath spoken." And the Savior often says, "He that hath an ear to hear let him hear." The instructions of divine truth must be known and felt by us in the joys of heaven, or in the woes of hell, for ever and ever.

6. They who are rightly affected, will esteem divine

truth the richest treasure. It is the only means of light and life, of hope and peace, of strength and joy to our souls. It is of more worth than our daily bread, or the vital air.

7. They who reject divine truth, will turn all things against themselves. Even the gospel of the grace of God will be a savor of death unto death to their souls. They must fall under the weight of their own sin and guilt and weep and gnash their teeth in the blackness of darkness forever and ever.

8. By what strong and solemn bonds are the preachers and teachers of divine truth bound to be faithful! May they be so humble and yet so bold, that divine truth and grace may flow from their hearts like rivers of living water, to refresh the weary people of God and to convey the waters of life to the dead in sin.

9. To every sinner God says, "Hear and your soul shall live."

10. To every saint the Lord Jesus Christ says, "Unto you that hear, shall more be given." Amen.

E R R A T A .

Page 49, 9th line from top, for *honor* read *favor*.

Page 92, 2d line from bottom, for *perverts* read *prevents*.

